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THE UNIVERSITY OF ALBERTA
THE FIGURE OF THE ARTIST IN MODERN CANADIAN FICTION

by



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A THESIS

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The undersigned certify that they have read, and recommend to the Faculty of Graduate Studies and Research, for acceptance, a thesis entitled "The Figure of the Artist in Modern Canadian Fiction" submitted by Einhard Franz Hinrich Kluge in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Arts.

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ABSTRACT

This thesis analyses the artist-heroes appearing in several Canadian novels. It examines their relationships to others, to modern society and to nature. Also considered is their preference for the 'tower' or the 'fount'. These terms are defined in Ivory Towers and Sacred Founts.

Chapter One examines the artist-heroes appearing between 1889 and 1940, concentrating on those found after 1920. The discussion focuses on The Yoke of Life, White Narcissus, and Our Little Life. It is noted that artists dependent on the land for a living try to leave it because physical work hinders their creative activities. Their personal relationships are usually poor. Viewed collectively, they display no preference for the tower or fount, nor any tendency to accept or reject modern society.

Chapter Two considers artists from the years between 1920 and 1940. It deals with The Mountain and the Valley, As For Me and My House and Music at the Close. These heroes share several characteristics with their predecessors: they try to leave the land because physical work impedes artistic ambitions; their personal relationships are poor; they show no general preference for tower or fount. A new characteristic however is their acceptance of modern society.

Chapter Three, emphasizing White Figure, White Ground, The Lonely Ones and The Favorite Game analyses artists appearing after 1960. Based in the city these protagonists have a positive attitude towards the land but are alienated from modern society. They have poor personal relationships and prefer the fount.

The Conclusion, taking an overall view, notes several characteristics marking the Canadian artist-hero: his personal relationships are poor; he prefers the fount; when dependent on the land he tries to leave it. When free of it, he often returns. The arena of his struggles gradually shifts inward over the years. Before 1960 he usually struggles against environmental obstacles to creativity but after this time, he finds these obstacles mainly within himself. The thesis closes with a general comment on the place of artist-fiction in Canadian literature.

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INTRODUCTION

In recent Canadian fiction the artist hero has assumed the importance that he had in America in the 1850's when the nation was finding its tongue in the work of Hawthorne, Melville and Poe. The hero of Hugh McLennan's Two Solitudes is a writer; writers, singers and actors are the storm center of Robertson Davies' fiction and Sinclair Ross, Ernest Buckler and Mordecai Richler have all studied the anguish of the failed Canadian writer.¹

The validity of McPherson's remark regarding the importance of the artist in recent Canadian fiction is substantiated by the fact that since 1940 (when the writers he mentions first began to publish) at least twenty-seven novels featuring artists or persons with artistic temperaments as major characters have appeared in Canada. As demonstrated by his list, artist-fiction has engaged the interest of some of the best-known contemporary Canadian authors; to the names already noted one might add Edward McCourt, who has published several novels of this type during the last two decades, and Leonard Cohen, whose The Favorite Game is probably the best artist-novel published in the sixties.² However the history of artist-fiction in Canada begins well before the middle years of the twentieth century. As a matter of fact,

¹Hugh McPherson, "Prodigies of God and Man", Canadian Literature, 15 (Winter 1963), 74.

²Evidence for this statement will be provided in the last chapter of this paper.

its origins can be traced back to 1889 when Jane Conger's A Daughter of Saint Peters was first presented to the public. Between that year and 1940 at least twenty artist-novels were produced in this nation, the most important of them being Frederick Philip Grove's The Yoke of Life. The fact that a significant number of Canadian writers have displayed such interest in the artist-hero suggests that this character may be a worthwhile object of study. The aim of my paper is to examine him as he appears in several Canadian novels.

For the purposes of this study a person engaged in almost any kind of creative activity will be considered an artist. He may be a painter, a composer, a writer or whatever, as long as he creates, by means of the imagination, something which has not existed before. A partial exception to this criterion will be made of Robert Fulton, the protagonist of Our Little Life, who as a later discussion will demonstrate, is in a rather unique position. His aesthetic sensibilities have been destroyed by the climatic and social conditions prevailing in Canada and consequently he manifests his talents not in an imaginative creation but in a book analysing the lot of the artist in this country. Because he is obviously a special case, and because he makes such interesting observations about the artist in Canada, he will be included in this study. Since one of the major aims of this paper is to analyse the interaction of the imagination and the world, interpretive artists, such as

singers will not be dealt with. Their imaginations are not concerned primarily with the surrounding world, but with another work of art, which is 're-created' in a new way.

In view of the fact that creative artists are to be at the center of our attention, it may be of some use to clarify what is meant by the term 'imagination'. The paper will base its definition of this faculty on Coleridge's statement that it "reveals itself in the balance or reconciliation of opposite or discordant qualities."³ One notes that in making such reconciliations the imagination must transform these opposites in some way; consequently it may be looked upon as a transforming agency in the human mind. Whenever the imaginative activities of an artist-hero are to be analysed, the view that transformation is the major function of this faculty will be the basis of the discussion. Such an analysis may not however always be possible for the reason that some authors do not present the reader with sufficient information about the protagonist's imaginative activities. Not all writers of artist-fiction describe a work produced by the hero or give us insight into his mind. Lacking such data it is impossible to see in what way the imagination has transformed the world with which it is confronted.

³S.T. Coleridge, Biographia Literaria, Chapter XIV, in Alfred Noyes, ed., English Romantic Poetry and Prose, (New York: Oxford University Press, 1956), p. 426.

The examination of the Canadian artist-hero will concentrate largely on the various kinds of relationships in which he is involved; particular attention will be paid to his relationships to others, to the modern world and to the natural environment. The aim of analysing the first of these relationships is to learn about his character by examining his behavior towards other persons. The second relationship is examined in order to see in what way the artist adapts himself to the modern world. Occasionally it will be possible to consider not only his relationship to modern society in general but also to modern Canadian society in particular. For example, Paul Tallard of Hugh MacLennan's Two Solitudes is deeply involved in the problems caused by the existence of two, seemingly hostile founding races in this nation.

Because the natural environment is such an important factor in the lives of all Canadians, this study will examine the artist-hero's relationship to it. Such things as the protagonist's positive or negative feelings towards nature, and how (whenever sufficient data is given by the author) these feelings are manifested in his imaginative activities will be considered. To speak of 'the' natural environment is however misleading, the implication being that only one kind of environment exists. There are in fact two, which in this paper will be called the 'land' and 'nature'. When the artist is dependent on the natural world, when in order to earn a livelihood he is obliged to

fulfill its demands, the term 'land' will be used. Artists living on the land usually attempt to leave it because the work required of them takes time and energy that might be devoted to their artistic ambitions. The term 'nature' is employed in the case of artists who are independent of the natural environment, who are not obliged to struggle against it for the opportunity to develop their talents. A consequence of their 'favored' position is that their attitude towards the environment is, almost without exception, more positive than that of their less fortunate counterparts. However it should not be forgotten that independence and dependence are only two extremes on a scale and that between them lie various degrees of each. Not every artist-hero's relationship can be expected to fall neatly into either of these categories and when it does not, the degree of dependency will determine whether the term 'land' or 'nature' is to be used.

The importance of analysing the artist's relationship to the natural environment also provides one criterion for selecting the novels to be dealt with. Obviously works set outside of Canada, where our environment and the artist cannot confront one another, must be excluded from this study.

In Ivory Towers and Sacred Founts, Maurice Beebe draws to our attention to other factors that might be considered in a study of the artist-hero. His research has shown that such characters can generally be classified as

belonging to one of three groups: those who adhere to the fount tradition; those who adhere to the tower tradition; and those who unify the two. The terms 'fount' and 'tower' refer to the ways in which artists relate themselves to the life of the world around them.

The artist associated with the fount believes in participating in the life of the world; he displays a great desire for involvement in the affairs of mankind and wholly opposes the notion that he should be isolated from his fellow men. Such artists make their own experiences of the world the material from which they create their works. Their art is, in the words of Beebe, a "re-creation of [personal] experience".⁴

The artist attracted by the ivory tower prefers to remain aloof from the world, to observe rather than to participate in the concerns of men. Often he looks down upon mankind, and it is not unusual for him to be pained by his own human limitations and needs. In many cases the need for companionship and sex is especially irritating to him. As a result of these feelings he may desire "release from human bondage",⁵ that is, from the conditions and factors that shape the lives of most persons. He attempts to live as if these things have no bearing on his existence. Another

⁴Maurice Beebe, Ivory Towers and Sacred Founts, (New York: New York University Press, 1964), p. 13.

⁵Ibid., p. 114.

manifestation of these feelings is the wish to efface all traces of his limited, human, personality from his works. Obviously an artist of this type has little inclination to re-create his personal experiences of the world. He prefers to record his observations, which he tries to make in a spirit of god-like detachment from his surroundings. The talent for self-effacement often possessed by such artists allows them to imaginatively enter the minds of other men. Consequently their capacity for understanding them is usually superior to that of the artists whose experiencing selves are the focal point of their attention. A few of the artists belonging to the tower desire to forget "the physical degradation of existence"⁶ and to concern themselves only with spiritual things and art. They wish to see through the deceptive material 'surface' of the world to the non-physical, spiritual reality beneath it.

The theme of the "divided self",⁷ of which Beebe has also taken note, is closely related to the artist's preference for the tower or fount. It concerns the conflict between "man values and art values",⁸ that is, between the human side of the artist with need for such things as sex, and companionship, and the creative side of him which demands, at least temporarily, rest and detachment from the

⁶Ibid., p. 132.

⁷Ibid., p. 21. This term is part of the title of the first chapter.

⁸Ibid., p. 303.

world. Obviously the artist with a predilection for the tower is more ready to surrender the "man values" than is the artist who prefers the fount. In choosing the tower or the fount the artist-hero is attempting to resolve this conflict by elevating one aspect of himself over another. The choice he makes may impair either his capacity to create or his capacity to live in the world. Because the theme of the "divided self" is implicitly contained in any discussion of the artist-hero's tendencies towards the tower or the fount, it will not be given separate consideration unless it is explicitly manifested in the novels.

Since in most artist-heroes there is a mixture of characteristics from the tower and the fount, the strongest tendency will be the determining factor in deciding to which tradition he belongs. Occasionally an artist unifies both traditions. Such protagonists, who are extremely rare in Canadian fiction, have balanced numerous characteristics from both tower and fount so that neither is dominant in their minds.

Because of the nature of the satire itself, the paper will not examine satirical works of artist-fiction. Satire, as Northrop Frye points out, criticizes and does so from a position of moral superiority.⁹ An integral part analysing the artist-hero as portrayed by a satirist would be the discovery of the author's point of view, and an

⁹ Northrop Frye, *Anatomy of Criticism*, (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1957), p. 223-24.

assessment of its validity. These tasks constitute a diversion from the major goal of the paper which intends to concentrate on the artist and not on a critical view held by any author. The existence of satirical artist-hero novels will be briefly noted during the course of this study.

A few words about the general organization of the paper may be of service to the reader. It is divided into three chapters, each dealing with one period in the history of Canadian artist-fiction. In every chapter, three novels are given detailed consideration, and a number of others are discussed briefly. Chapter One contains two sections, the first dealing with artist-fiction from 1889 to 1920, the second with fiction produced between 1920 and 1940. Chapter Two considers novels written in the twenty years following 1940 and Chapter Three examines artist-novels published after 1960.

In the first two chapters the protagonists are considered in order of their decreasing dependency on the land, a course of action justified by the observation that to escape the land is the most common goal of the early artist-heroes. The character most attached to the land will be analysed first in these chapters. However, in the artist-novels of the sixties there is a general tendency for the artists to return to nature. Therefore in Chapter Three they will be discussed in the order of their increasing intimacy with it; the protagonist most detached from nature will be considered first. The positive attitude displayed

towards nature by the majority of the later artist-heroes may be manifested in various ways. It may take the form of a temporary or even permanent return to the natural environment or it may remain a belief that nature is essentially well disposed towards the artist.

Two criteria have been employed in the selection of the novels to be examined. The first of these is the ability of a work to comply with the various conditions that have previously been laid down. Only non-satirical works set in Canada and featuring creative (non-interpretive) artists will be given detailed consideration. Should a number of novels in a period be able to meet these conditions, a second, criterion will be employed. It considers such things as whether the novel is well-written and interesting and whether the struggle to create is its focal point. Novels emphasizing the struggle will be preferred because they provide a good opportunity to see the interaction of the imagination and the world. The application of these criteria leaves a list of nine novels to be examined in this study. They are: F.P. Grove's The Yoke of Life; Raymond Knister's White Narcissus; Georgina Sime's Our Little Life; Ernest Buckler's The Mountain and the Valley; Edward McCourt's Music at the Close; Sinclair Ross's As For Me and My House; Hugh Hood's White Figure, White Ground; James Bacque's The Lonely Ones; and Leonard Cohen's The Favorite Game.

CHAPTER I

THE ARTIST-HERO FROM 1890 TO 1940

Since the late eighteenth century the figure of the artist has held a prominent position in the fiction of England, Europe and America. At this time Goethe, in such works as The Sorrows of Young Werther (1774), Wilhelm Meister's Apprenticeship (1794) and the play Tarquato Tasso (1788) "pioneered the use of artists as central characters in fictional and dramatic works."¹ His influence, as well as that of Rousseau was so powerful that by 1800 the artist was a well-established figure in the novels written on the Continent. In England few artist-novels were written before the 1830's, and they did not become really popular until the 1890's.² The figure of the artist has attracted the attention of some of the most distinguished authors to appear after Goethe and Rousseau. Writers, painters and musicians have been featured as the protagonists in works

¹Maurice Beebe, Ivory Towers and Sacred Founts. Most of the information contained in these opening paragraphs is based on the first chapter of Beebe's extremely useful book.

²Gerald Jay Goldberg, "The Artist-Novel in Transition," English Fiction in Transition IV (third issue, 1961), 25. Goldberg states that it was "in the period 1890 to 1930 . . . that the English *Kunstlerroman* reached the height of its popularity with writers"

by such authors as Balzac, Henry James, Marcel Proust, Romain Rolland and James Joyce. Other contributors to the "genre"³ of artist-fiction could easily be cited. Although the popularity of such fiction declined somewhat after the first two decades of the twentieth century, numerous artist-novels have been published since that time.⁴

While in Europe and America the work of Goethe and Rousseau inspired a number of early followers, in Canada, no author published an artist-novel until 1889.⁵ In that year Jane Conger's A Daughter of Saint Peters appeared. This work, which is in all probability the first Canadian artist-hero novel, deals with "young artists in Rome."⁶ Before 1889, some authors, Susanna Moodie for example, had in their journals touched on some of the problems faced by the artist in the New World, but no one, it seems, attempted to create any fictional portraits of the artist. It should also be

³Beebe, Ivory Towers and Sacred Founts, p. v. He refers to artist-novels as a "genre of fiction." This paper will also use the term 'genre' when referring to artist-fiction.

⁴See Beebe, Ivory Towers and Sacred Founts, p. 4. When Beebe says that the "Tradition of artist-fiction . . . reached a crest in the first two decades of the twentieth century . . .", he is apparently referring to artist-fiction in general. Goldberg, in claiming that artist-fiction reached its height between 1890 and 1930 is referring specifically to England.

⁵This claim is based on information from the Literary History of Canada, (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1967), p. 310.

⁶Carl F. Klinck, ed., Literary History of Canada, (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1967), p. 310.

noted that in 1777 Frances Moore Brooke, the author of The History of Emily Montague (1769), published an artist-novel entitled The Excursion.⁷ However, since this work was written a decade after her departure from Canada in 1768, it can hardly be considered as a part of Canadian literature. Upon the publication of A Daughter of Saint Peters artist-hero fiction immediately became popular. Maud Ogilvy's Marie Gourdon (1890), Thaddeus Leavitt's The Witch of Plum Hollow (1892) and Sara Jeanette Duncan's A Daughter of To-day (1894) are only three of the numerous artist-novels appearing around this time.⁸

The lack of artist-fiction in early nineteenth century Canada may be at least partially accounted for by the kind of mentality produced by harsh living conditions. Faced with the problems of earning a livelihood the pioneer would be more interested in 'bread and butter' matters than in art. Wilfrid Eggleston writes that on "a hard frontier the values of society are likely to be sternly utilitarian."⁹ The artist, who can contribute nothing to "the mastery of the adverse environment"¹⁰ would hardly appeal

⁷Gerald Jay Goldberg, "The Artist Novel in Transition," 12.

⁸This list is based on the Literary History of Canada, p. 310.

⁹Wilfrid Eggleston, The Frontier and Canadian Letters. (Toronto: The Ryerson Press, 1957), p. 55.

¹⁰*Ibid.*, p. 40.

to the pioneer even when presented as a fictional character. The survival of this utilitarian outlook in the towns and cities is one possible reason why the urban readers showed a lack of interest in the artist-hero.¹² Writers consequently had little incentive to create such characters. The non-existence of artist-fiction in early Canada may also be partially accounted for by the fact that works of this genre were not really popular in England until 1890. Since Canadians read a great deal of English fiction they probably encountered little to inspire any interest in artist-fiction.¹³

One factor in the sudden emergence of Canadian artist-fiction around 1890 may well have been the rise of this genre's popularity in England during these years. The popularity of such fiction apparently influenced the tastes of Canadian readers. The Literary History of Canada notes that in these years Canadian audiences were being made aware of the supposed glories of artistic life by such writers as Corelli, Kipling and Fothergill.¹⁴ Public interest in

¹¹Gerald Jay Goldberg, "The Artist-Novel in Transition," 25.

¹²The fact that pioneer values survive pioneer times in the theme of Chapter Nine of The Frontier and Canadian Letters.

¹³See Eggleston, The Frontier and Canadian Letters, p. 125 on the matter of foreign books in Canada.

¹⁴Carl F. Klinck, ed., Literary History of Canada, p. 281.

artists seems to have encouraged a few Canadian authors to make them the heroes of their novels.

The first thirty years of Canadian artist-fiction are not marked by the appearance of any particularly distinguished works. The characters in these novels are usually shallow, plots are often implausible and the quality of writing is generally poor.¹⁵ Virtually all of these works have been forgotten. One novel that might still interest modern readers is Sara Jeanette Duncan's A Daughter of To-day (1894) which tells of the career of Elfrida Bell, a talented American girl trying to achieve success as a painter and writer in Paris and London. The novel is competently written and the heroine is believable. Duncan wrote two other novels containing artists. The Path of a Star was published in 1899 and The Consort appeared in 1912.

A notable characteristic of the artist-novels produced during the first thirty years after the appearance of Conger's book, is the use of foreign settings. The Literary History of Canada notes that "very [few] Canadian fictions pictured the writer or artist as indigenous" (310). The use of foreign settings may be partially explained by

¹⁵The Literary History of Canada makes no mention of any outstanding artist-novel at this time. The criticisms offered in this statement are based on my own readings of several early artist novels. These are, Judith Moore; or Fashioning a Pipe (1898); The Village Artist (1905); The City of Comrades (1919); The Silver Poppy (1903); The Pretender (1914); A Daughter of Today (1894).

the popularity of novels set in other lands. Many writers of artist-fiction were probably imitating Haliburton's extremely successful portraits of "provincials abroad"¹⁶ or "American books about innocents abroad, [and] passionate pilgrims."¹⁷ Also to be considered in any explanation of this phenomenon is the fact that many Canadian writers in the years between 1880 and 1920 left Canada for other lands. The usual destinations were London, Boston and New York, where they found they could earn a living as authors more easily than in Canada.¹⁸ Among those to leave were Sara Jeanette Duncan and Arthur Stringer both of whom wrote artist-fiction. The use of foreign settings in Canadian artist-novels may be, at least to some extent, a reflection of the fact that numerous Canadian artists found it expedient to go abroad.

A small number of artist-hero novels did however employ Canadian settings. Joanna Wood's Judith Moore; or Fashioning a Pipe (1898) is the story of a singer who decides that love and marriage in Ovid, Ontario are more valuable than international fame. The Village Artist

¹⁶Carl F. Klinck, ed., Literary History of Canada, p. 308.

¹⁷Ibid.

¹⁸Eggleston, in The Frontier and Canadian Letters, p. 115, provides a list of Canadian authors who left for other lands.

¹⁹Ralph Connor was one Canadian author who was enormously successful at home as well as abroad.

(1905) by Adeline Teskey is set in a village in rural Ontario, where the heroine of the novel, Mrs. Simes, employs her artistic ability to reform certain people. Other novels featuring native settings are Maud Pettitt's Beth Woodburn (1897); W.A. Fraser's The Lone Furrow (1907) and Susie Harrison's Ringfield (1914).

In the years following 1920 the artist novels written by Canadians usually feature native settings. This change from a contrary trend prevalent during the first three decades after 1889 seems to have been a manifestation of a growing tendency in the writers of this time to interest themselves in Canada. The Literary History of Canada notes the existence of such a tendency by stating that if the period between 1920 and 1940 deserves to be remembered "it is as the time when a few novelists first seriously tried to come to terms with their Canadian environment" (658). The upsurge of nationalistic feelings inspired by Canada's role in World War One is probably one factor in the development of this trend which has continued to the present day. Since 1920 few Canadian artist novels have employed foreign settings.

The two decades between 1920 and 1940 saw the publication of numerous artist-hero novels in Canada. At least nine such novels appeared during these years.²⁰ Of

²⁰A list of those works not specifically dealt with will be found at the end of this chapter. The works of Mazo de la Roche, for reasons to be presented in this chapter have not been counted among the nine.

these, three will be carefully examined in the following pages. They are Georgina Sime's Our Little Life (1921), Raymond Knister's White Narcissus (1929) and Frederick Philip Grove's The Yoke of Life (1930). The last two works do not need to be introduced to most students of Canadian literature but the first is not at all well-known. Despite its obscurity it is noteworthy for being "the first novel to deal fully and accurately with the contemporary life of a Canadian city."²¹ The problems faced by the artist in a highly competitive urban society is the central theme of this book. Grove's work is easily the best of these three novels. No other piece of artist-fiction produced at this time approaches its depth of character portrayal or deals so interestingly with the struggles of a potential artist. Knister's novel, is less engaging than the other two works insofar as it does not present the struggle to create. It is valuable to this study largely for its presentation of the artist's relationship to the natural environment. A fourth novel, Pierre Coalfleet's Solo (1924), will be discussed very briefly.

A common idea found in these novels by Grove and Knister is that the artist if he is to fulfill his ambitions must leave the land. The kind of existence demanded by the land is simply not compatible with the pursuit of

²¹Carl F. Klinck, ed., Literary History of Canada, p. 675.

artistic aspirations. Len Sterner of The Yoke of Life and Richard Milne of White Narcissus attempt to leave the land for this reason. Only the latter character succeeds in his efforts and goes on to become a well-known writer. Len Sterner, who never is able to completely free himself from the land fails to achieve any of his ambitions. The land while admittedly not the only cause of his failure contributes greatly to it.

Len Sterner, the protagonist of The Yoke of Life, is a Canadian Jude. It would seem that the similarities between Grove's work and Hardy's Jude the Obscure were not lost on some of the early reviewers. However, Desmond Pacey denies that Grove's novel is in any way derivative of Hardy's masterpiece.

The inevitable comparison for the Yoke of Life is with Thomas Hardy's Jude the Obscure, the main theme being identical; so it may be in order to say that Grove when he wrote this novel had never read a line of Hardy.²²

Jude and Len are not only alike in their struggle for intellectual development but also in the fact that they fail to achieve their aims.

As with Jude, Len Sterner's predilection for intellectual pursuits manifests itself early in life. At the age of sixteen he decides (as many young men and women have done at that age) that he is going to master all of the world's knowledge. He is not easily turned from this ambition. Even when working in a lumber camp or in a city,

²²Desmond Pacey, ed., Frederick Philip Grove, (Toronto: The Ryerson Press, 1970), p. 145.

shovelling coal he spends much time studying. There are of course moments when he is disillusioned with his ambitions but on the whole, until near the end of his life, he pursues them rather doggedly.

Scholarship is not the only endeavor in which Len displays unusual abilities; he also possesses a powerful imagination. This is made evident by several events. While he is walking in the bush around the farm one day his imagination transforms an ordinary deer standing behind some trees into a unicorn. This experience is so overwhelming that he is never able to forget it. Moreover, the poetic cast of his mind is shown in that the factual (scientific) explanation does not appeal to him as strongly as does the 'mystical' one. "The unexplainable made its appeal: poetry, mystic significance, religious symbolism"²³. Another time, waiting at night in a railroad station for the train that will take him to the lumber camp where he is to earn money to help support his family, his imagination transforms the place into something like an outpost of hell. He 'feels' the presence of "supernatural things" (96), sees people as "goblins" (98) and the headlight of the locomotive as a "single evil eye" (97). His imaginative abilities are manifested not only in his private visionary

²³Frederick Philip Grove, The Yoke of Life (Toronto: Macmillan, 1930) p. 69, All quotations used in this section dealing with The Yoke of Life are from the novel unless other indications are given.

experiences but also in several poetic speeches to Lydia Hausman. He tells her that she will change from a girl to a beautiful woman in the following words:

Under the eaves of our sheep shed . . . there hangs a puppa, attached to the boards by a fine thin stalk. It is grayish brown and quite plain. It looks like wood and has been there since last fall. Inside of it something is growing; and soon it will burst its shell. It will be a butterfly, checkered in gold and black. (156)

Len's literary ability also manifests in the letters that he writes from the lumber camp to Mr. Crawford, his old teacher.

This gentleman tells Len that any professional writer could be proud of his descriptions of the land surrounding the camp. Crawford inspires in Len artistic ambitions which are doomed never to be realized. During his last expedition into the woods he tells Lydia of these ambitions:

Art! he said suddenly. Literature! . . . Perhaps to dabble in it myself . . . There are many moods in me of which I should have remained unaware had I not read. There are perhaps a few moods which I might have expressed myself had I not been swamped by other things, by life, by (345)

When these words are spoken Len is on the eve of his death, knowing that he has failed to reach any of his intellectual and artistic goals. He has not mastered all knowledge, he has not become a teacher and he has not expressed his ideas and feelings in poetry.

Much of the blame for Len Sterner's failure must rest with the land which hindered the development of his talents. A significant portion of his energy is absorbed by the struggle for a livelihood in an environment that

seems reluctant to allow human settlement. The best example of the land's 'hostility' is the hailstorm which destroys what would have been a profitable crop. This tragedy makes it necessary for Len to interrupt his schooling in order to work in lumber camp to help support his family. Even in 'good' times he is frequently obliged to miss school in order to work on the land. Obviously the limitations it imposes on his formal education have a detrimental affect on the development of his talent. His difficulties with the land are intensified by the fact that he is physically unsuited to the type of work it demands. He is described as being "all too slender" (48); he lifts things "with the effort of desperation" (48) and not with natural ease. Although the land hinders him from fulfilling his ambitions Len's attitude towards it is not bitter or hostile. He does not constantly long to escape it. He appears to be something of a stoic, accepting as best he can whatever is meted out by 'fate.'

However too much should not be made of his stoical response to the land. That is after all only the response of a person who lives on the land-as-environment and who must bow to its demands if he wishes to survive. It is still necessary to consider his response as a poet, to examine in other words, the land as an object of his imagination. An interesting pattern emerges when this is done. Len tends to see the land as "bewitched" (11), as "enchanted" (11) and as "filled with a supernatural quality" (13).

The lake that he wants to visit is said to be "as wonderful as fairyland" (9). Other manifestations of this tendency are the vision of the unicorn and the vision of "goblins" (98) in the railway station. It is clear that all of the images (even the 'infernal' ones) used in his imaginative relationship with nature are somehow connected with a 'fairyland,' a realm that is non-physical, spiritual and divorced from the everyday world that surrounds him. Len is idealizing, 'de-carnalizing' or, to use another term, 'spiritualizing' the land. By seeing the land in largely 'spiritual' terms Len is in effect attempting to ignore the physical aspects of the land which have treated him very unkindly. Thus, to anticipate a point that will be reiterated later, he uses the imagination not as an agent of transformation, metamorphosing the various aspects of the world around him, but as an agent of denial. He uses it to create an imaginative world that ignores or denies certain parts of reality.

In seeing nature, the physical realm, as a kind of 'fairyland' he is in effect, trying to recreate it in the image of his own feelings and desires. Since Len's desires are directed chiefly to the attainment of spiritual goals the attempt to 'spiritualize' nature is perfectly consistent with these aims. The reader is actually told that Len is projecting his feelings onto nature. It is said that he is of a kind with the mystic poets who "project into nature the procreations of that awe in which they stand of

themselves in the forms of fabulous concrescences of incongruous parts . . ." (68). This statement refers specifically to his vision of the unicorn. Interpreted broadly, these lines state that Len projects onto nature his own image, making it a mirror of his feelings for himself. These feelings are linked with his spiritual ambitions; (One assumes that he is an integrated personality) therefore the projective process would result in a spiritual image of nature. In his case he sees it as a 'fairyland.'

There exists a strange correspondence between Len's relationship to the land and his relationship to Lydia Hausman, the girl with whom he falls in love. This becomes evident when she is examined first as a person and then as an object of imagination. As a person Lydia is a correlate of the land which she resembles insofar as she is interested mainly in material things. Her materialistic attitude is shown in such exclamations as "I want lots of money" (159). She is inordinately fond of good clothes and spends most of her money on them; unlike Len she contributes nothing to the support of her family. Later she runs off with a man who is able to provide her with a good material livelihood. When she is found by Len on the streets of Winnipeg she is a whore, a woman who is valued not for her soul or personality but only for her physical aspects. Lydia however is not entirely devoid of spirit, a fact seen in her faithful nursing of the sick Len. Nevertheless it cannot be denied that her basic orientation towards life is

materialistic. Noteworthy too is the fact that her desire for pleasure and excitement show her to be a representative of the fount, the world of experience.

Because Len Sterner's orientation to life is primarily spiritual he is unable to come to terms with Lydia-as-person. He is incapable of accepting, not only her essentially materialistic frame of mind, but also her physical, that is carnal, bodily nature. This corresponds to his inability to accept the physical aspects of the land. Instead of accepting her as she is he seeks by means of his imagination to 'spiritualize' her. "Her he purified, deified in his thought" (28).

He saw Lydia etherealized, de-carnalized; she was
Miranda; she might have been his redemptress . . .
She stood before his mental vision untouched . . .
She must be enshrined (281)

Out of Lydia-as-person he creates an ideal Lydia, pure, spiritual, and acceptable to him, but nothing like her in fact. It would seem that Len Sterner is hardly aware of the existence of Lydia as a real person, that he is merely attracted by an image which he has created for himself. Only towards the end of his long and difficult life does he come to realize that he has "seen in Lydia what she was not" (222). He learns that to this image of her, to "this product of his mind and his soul he [has] enslaved himself" (222). Like the land, Lydia Hausman refuses to conform to his image and goes her own way. The land for its part resists Len's attempts to 'spiritualize' it by relentlessly

pressing him to live at its own pragmatic level, by forcing him to earn a living for himself and his family. It never 'allows' him to forget its physical side, to lose himself totally in his own vision of it. Lydia Hausman's letters perform a similar function. They gradually make him realize that she is a separate person:

[She] was not a mere projection of the vague stirrings in himself; . . . She led a life of her own over which he had no control; . . . [He] had seen in her only that projection of his vague stirrings to which no reality could correspond. (139)

He begins slowly to see the fact that she neither is nor ever can be the wholly spiritual creature he desires her to be. If he is ever to possess her he must learn to accept her physical, that is, bodily aspects.

Not only is Len initially incapable of accepting the physical aspects of the land and the bodily nature of Lydia, he is also unable, at least for a long time, to accept his own carnal desires. Gradually however he must recognize his sexual urges even though he finds "the carnal and jealous element" (140) which enters his thoughts of Lydia "intensely disquieting" (140). The existence of such desires is, so he believes, incompatible with his spiritual ambitions. Len, who identifies his 'real' self with his mind and spirit finds that he is 'threatened' by another, 'physical self.' He is overwhelmed by his feelings when sitting close to Lydia.

His brain was in a whirl . . . A minute ago his whole being had been mind; now it was all sense. He felt he was being conquered by something which was not his own, ordinary, self; as if another self were rising within him; eclipsing him - what was "he" in himself - and merging him into the fiery sea of his blood. (161)

In this incident one sees an example of the "divided self" which according to Beebe is a major factor in the lives of many artist-heroes. Len's 'human self' wants to possess the physical Lydia, while the 'artist self,' which is identified with his spiritual or creative ambitions, will not accept her in that way. Instead it 'spiritualizes' her, creating of her an image that is nothing like her in fact. His willingness to recognize nothing but the spiritual aspect of things leads him to ignore both her and his physical needs.

As stated earlier, Len Sterner does violence to the imagination by making it an agent of denial instead of using it as an agent of transformation. His 'spiritualization' of things is not a transformation of reality in its various aspects but a denial of whatever parts he is unable or unwilling to tolerate. He will not accept the physical either in nature, in Lydia or in himself. His vision of a 'fairylane' fits the harsh rough environment in which he lives no more than the image of Lydia fits the real girl. Nor is his self-image appropriate to him. Len's imagination is being used as a weapon against reality; he declares a war "between art and life,"²⁴ that is, between the

²⁴Beebe, Ivory Towers and Sacred Founts, p. 66.

imagination and the world.

The essential tendency of Len's imagination is to remove or distance itself from the world and the physical parts, aspects of it which he considers 'impure.' This characteristic he shares with many of the artist-heroes who seek refuge from the world in the tower of art. This type of creator "far from wanting to live more fully . . . represents his carnal appetites and natural instincts and yearns for release from human bondage."²⁵ Len displays the "requisite indifference to reality"²⁶ or at least he attempts to do so. His name also indicates that he would like to be an artist of the tower variety. The word 'sterner' is derived from the German word for 'star' which connotes not only ambition but also distance and purity. The attainment of the latter condition is the major goal of the artist in the ivory tower. Having recognized that he has a predilection for the tower one understands, from another point of view, his objection to the physical aspects of Lydia which are connected with her love for pleasure and experience. Len apparently sees their impulses as being mutually exclusive. Although some artist-heroes are capable of balancing the tendencies to the tower and the fount Len Sterner is not among them. He seems to hold that one or the other must be victorious. As stated earlier, in Len, art, which he

²⁵Ibid., p. 114.

²⁶Ibid., p. 134.

identifies with the tower, purity and spirit are at odds with the life which is identified with the fount, the impure and the carnal. When this occurs Beebe informs the reader that "one side may defeat the other but the victory is usually pyrrhic."²⁷ Len Sterner, despite a momentary reconciliation of these opposites by the lake achieves such a victory.

Len's insistent desire for purity is the decisive factor in explaining the strange end to which he brings himself and Lydia Hausman. After finding her in Winnipeg they travel to the lake which he has always wanted to visit. He finds the land is no longer 'hostile' to him, that is, it conforms to his vision of it as a 'fairyland.' Lydia underscores this fact by referring to it as "Eden" (329) on a number of occasions. At the lake they lead an almost primeval existence, living in a simple manner from day to day. However it is not only the land that is so dramatically transformed but Lydia as well. Len is amazed by the change in her; she has dropped the mannerisms of a city prostitute and returned to the ways of a country girl. "Her movements were no longer calculated to fascinate or allure; they were sincere . . ." (315). The change in Lydia is paralleled by Len's new vision of her.

He thought of the new Lydia whom he had seen, resurrected and unlike her who had stirred impure blood; unlike also the deified, ethereal being of his fancy years ago. She was earthly, flesh and blood yet purified by he knew not what. He knew not what? By love. (324)

²⁷Ibid., p. 66.

The 'vision' of her indicates that he has learned to accept the physical, the carnal in human beings. He is sharply transformed too, from a man who brought her to the woods to murder her as a symbol of all he thought vile to a person who desperately needs and wants her love. He tells her that in the eyes of God they are married, implying thereby that he believes their sexual union will be pure and holy. Moreover since Lydia is a representative of the fount, the new vision of her indicates the 'potential' for a reconciliation between Len and the world of experience. The word 'potential' is used because this reconciliation must be tested in the experiential world beyond the lake, something which Len is in the last analysis unwilling to do. He fears that the state of existence they have attained in "Eden," the 'higher purity' in which the opposites of spirit and flesh, tower and fount are reconciled must come to an end. The carnal will intrude upon their 'marriage.' The carnal referred to here is not their sexual relations in "Eden," but the carnal they will encounter when they are no longer in this state, when they are back in the outside experiential world. He associates such sex with a prostitute who once played up to him. The memory of this incident he fears will arouse him to murder her; their "present union before God would be sullied" (348) by such an occurrence. Rather than risk a test of his new vision and the possible loss of purity in the outside world he decides to commit suicide. Unfortunately he convinces Lydia to

join him and they drown themselves in the lake.

His death represents a failure of the imagination. He is unable to accept and imaginatively transform the physical aspects of the land as well as the physical aspects of self and others. He prefers death to contact with these things and possible contamination by them.

Len's relationship to modern society as represented by the city is rather ambivalent. This attitude is reflected in his thought that the city meant "knowledge perhaps; or opportunity; but as likely doom and death" (226). On the positive side of his relationship to the city it must be noted that he easily finds work there and that he seems to have no complaints about it. He does not appear concerned about the fate of the artist in a highly competitive society. He finds time to finish high school and even prepares to take university entrance examinations. In many ways he appears to be happy there: [he] lived at last" (245).

When a year later he looked back on this time of his life it struck him how near he had been to his goal. (247)

On the basis of this information one is bound to conclude that modern society has not been hostile to his dreams. Only the city provides the opportunities that could have realized them. Modern society and the city have, from the point of view of his dreams, been benevolent towards him.

Despite the opportunities that it offers he does not see the city in an entirely positive manner. He is

fully aware of the fact that in the masses of people he is "a grain of sand" (227) to which others pay no heed. Len also has at the beginning of his sojourn in the city a rather 'hellish' vision of the railroad station.

Fiery legends, stationary or periodically changing traced themselves in the vacant air above the roofs of the building. (227)

Even more important is the fact that he seems to associate the city with sexual uncleanness, which as known, is intolerable to him. He is quite conscious of its immorality. Added evidence on this point is that later he is glad that in Lydia the "mincing step, considered so feminine by those who lived in towns or cities [has] disappeared" (315). As a result of these negative factors in his relationship to the city he is unable to wholly identify himself with it; he is "in the city but not of it" (232).

Len leaves the city for the farm after an encounter with its sexual uncleanness. An old friend whom he meets takes him to a whorehouse which he flees, sick, feverish and confused. For hours he wanders in the streets. During this time he decides that "life" (254) is more important to him than knowledge. Rather ironically he associates "his own parental homestead" (225) which has done so much to harm the dreams of his life, with "life." This fact is perhaps an indication of his confused state of mind.

The important aspect of this episode is that he has temporarily at least rejected his ambitions connected with the tower. Consequently he is impelled towards the fount,

a fact seen in his return to the city to seek Lydia who represents experience. He finds her and they embark on their fateful journey into the wilderness. However Len's unwillingness to test their reconciliation in the world shows that he still fears the experiential realm and its danger of impurity. Shortly before his death he says that "[life] was not for him" (324). He chooses to maintain purity by death rather than by strength, a decision leading him to a tragic end.

When Richard Milne, the protagonist of Raymond Knister's White Narcissus (1929), is introduced to the reader he is a highly successful author. He has, unlike Len Sterner, escaped the land on which he grew up and has fulfilled his creative ambitions. Knister's novel therefore does not record Milne's struggle against it but deals mainly with his attempts to persuade the woman he loves to marry him.

Although Milne's relationship to the natural environment is not the focal point of the novel this matter is not ignored. He is always aware of the natural environment. As a successful writer he is of course independent of it in which case it is referred to as 'nature.'²⁸ However he often recalls his childhood, the times when he was not free of the natural environment and had to struggle against it. In that situation it is called the 'land.' Consequently

²⁸See the Introduction to this paper on this point.

there are two different relationships to the natural environment to be considered in the following discussion.

As Richard Milne walks down the road to the farm of a boyhood companion, he gazes at the scenery and recalls his youth on the land.

How beautiful all this had been, and as the years of his boyhood had slipped past without more than a dream of wider freedom, how dreary! The changing of the seasons had only emphasized the impression of monotony and he had been held by inertia and uncertain hopes of fulfillment on the only soil he knew. He had begun to write and it was comparatively late that he had obeyed the questing spirit . . . Well, he had gone into the world and had done all that he had dreamed of doing (29, italics mine)

The essence of the matter is that he had grown tired of the narrow existence which the land allowed its inhabitants. On the land only a dream of freedom was possible, while real freedom lay elsewhere. Milne speaks of his early "smothered longing to get away into the world" (75). He was held to the land not by any love for it but by the fear of failing as a writer. After he left he achieved the artistic success that he had desired.

Whether or not there exists a causal connection between his departure from his boyhood home and his success as an artist cannot be known with any certainty. Milne himself is silent on this matter. However his memories of the land leave the impression that it stifles rather than inspires

²⁹ Raymond Knister, White Narcissus, (Toronto: McClelland Stewart, 1962), p. 23. Italics are mine. All quotations in the section dealing with White Narcissus are from this novel unless other indications are given.

art. The use of such words as "dreary" and "monotony" to describe the life on the land and the seasons convince one that the aspiring artist is better off elsewhere. During his visit he finds additional proof that the life on the land is incompatible with the pursuit of artistic ambitions. After voluntarily working on the land for a few days he finds that the "monotonous routine" (75) of such an existence causes him to forget his career as a writer and makes him unsure of his ambitions. Thus, life on the land (if he were to take it up again) is a direct threat to the continued development of his creative abilities.

When Richard Milne returns to his native region he is no longer dependent on it for a livelihood. For him it has become nature. This new relationship to the natural environment does not however alter his view as to its monotony; he finds it "the same with a sorrowful sameness" (24). However because Richard Milne is independent of the natural environment he is at times able to appreciate it. His freedom allows him to enjoy its beauties more than he could before since no demands are imposed upon him. Despite this fact he has no intention of remaining in his native region. Time and time again he makes it clear that once he has Ada, the woman he loves, he will leave "conclusively and forever" (75). While other reasons doubtlessly also impel him to make this decision it is obvious that he is not sufficiently attracted by nature to want to live in its proximity.

His relationship to the people on the land is one of reserved friendliness. He realizes that they (like many others who do not live in rural areas) are unable to understand the complexity of his work; therefore he refuses to discuss it with them. He tries to be cordial. With his first hosts, the Hymmersons, he takes a temporary if lack-luster interest in farmwork. When he moves to the Burnstile's he changes his attitude, planning to maintain the "aloofness of a summer boarder" (95). At most he is "prepared to be accommodating" (95) although later he finds himself on friendly terms with the children of this family.

While his actual relationship to the people on the land is friendly, polite, even if slightly reserved, his imaginative relationship to them is affectionate. In his books he tends to idealize them. He tells us that his work is criticized for presenting "too roseate a picture of rural life" (110). However his experience on this last visit alters his view of them. He concludes that nostalgia has interfered with his vision and vows that in the future he will portray the people in a more realistic manner. He will try to correct the discrepancy between the productions of his imagination and the real world.

The object of Milne's return to his native region is not to renew his affiliations with it but to win Ada Lethen whom he has loved since childhood. She is the only reason for his "periodic returns" (32) to this community. Without her he knows that he will remain an "unadjusted

person" (177), a "figure of absurd incompleteness" (177) although he may still remain a successful author. (It shall be shown shortly that for him being a successful writer and producing his best art are not synonymous). Ada is however more than the woman he needs to become a fulfilled man. She is also important to the development of his artistic abilities. She is, so Milne indicates, his muse.

It had been one of the twin deities of his life.
His urge to expression - and this. Perhaps she was
at the bottom of his urge to write. Otherwise she
might not have remained beside all his efforts as
they proceeded. (110, italics mine)

Elsewhere he also associates Ada and creativity:

Her part in his life . . . had been of a strong
growth with his ambitions and his bent for expres-
sion. And when these had taken him to the city
against his will, where he had slaved and managed
til his first books came out, . . . he still
thought of no other woman. (75)

He adds later that he could not "write an eloquent sentence, see a fair morning . . . without her face" (76). Moreover he believes that once they are together and away from this region he "would do none but his best creative work" (81). Although he has achieved success his talents have not, at least in his view, been perfected. For this to happen Ada's presence is necessary.

In order to secure Ada for himself Richard Milne must convince her to leave the parental home. This she is unwilling to do because she believes that the lives of her mutually estranged parents, who have not spoken to each other in several years, will "tumble into ruin" (62) if she does. She has already refused several of his proposals on

these grounds, thereby denying both of them fulfillment as human beings as well as depriving him of his muse. Both the prevailing conditions in the house and her reaction to them threaten their love and consequently the possible perfection of his creative abilities. However since the house provides the ground out of which her reaction grows it is the primary threat. From the point of view of its negative effects on his love and art the house functions as an 'ally' of the land which he once had to overcome. As a matter of fact, Richard also sees the natural environment as a threat to their relationship:

[Any] place in the world represented less danger to their love than this sheltered countryside in a remote part of Canada. (80).

Why it should have a negative effect on their love is not made clear.

It soon becomes apparent that Richard is wholly unsuccessful in convincing Ada to leave with him. She will not leave until her parents are reconciled with one another. Fortunately, just when he is about to abandon hope of attaining his end, Ada's father accidentally upsets some of the narcissi which her mother loves. This event brings about a long overdue confrontation between the two people. Milne seizes the opportunity and before anything can interfere with his plans he takes Ada down the long road leading away from her parents' farm.

Unlike Len Sterner, Richard Milne is a successful artist. He has "gone into the world and done all that he

[has] dreamed of doing" (24). Moreover, the fact that he enjoys his work for an advertising firm indicates that he has established a satisfactory relationship with modern society. Milne's relationship to the city also appears to be cordial. He obviously feels that it is easier to pursue his artistic ambitions there than on the land.

Richard Milne is, in all likelihood, an artist belonging to the found tradition. His desire to win Ada shows that he does not deny his human needs or see them as limitations to be overcome. At no time does Milne give any sign that he wants to escape from the world and life, a fact which also indicates that he prefers the fount to the tower.

While Len Sterner and Richard Milne find the city more compatible with the pursuit of artistic ambitions than the land, the city, as Robert Fulton discovers is not necessarily a haven for the artist. Fulton, the protagonist of Georgina Sime's Our Little Life (1921) lives in Montreal where he finds that the combination of a harsh climate and a highly competitive urban society is sufficient to impair his aesthetic sensibilities. The cold winters cause him such suffering that he is incapable of responding to the natural beauty around him. His suffering is aggravated by economic insecurity. Not only is he paid so poorly that he is unable to afford such necessities as a warm coat, but he is also obligated to spend the greater portion of his small fund of energy on the task of merely surviving in a highly competitive society.

Consequently he has little time and energy for his writing. In view of his extremely difficult situation it is not surprising that his aesthetic sensibilities wither. The narrator speaks directly to the reader to point this fact out.

Can you be artistic when the thermometer is 24 below and an icy wind is blowing and you haven't a fur coat? . . . Robert Fulton saw the world very much askew when he was too poor to be comfortable; a good meal, nicely served, would have paved his way to a far keener appreciation of lovely things.³⁰

The lonely, bitter and disappointed Fulton encounters Miss McGee, a seamstress who lives in the same apartment building. She considers herself "an artist in clothes" (231) creating beautiful and original dresses from those no longer fashionable. Unfortunately like Robert Fulton, her creative spirit, which she had previously 'poured' into her work is weakened by the poor climate and inadequate wages. Together, Fulton and McGee make each other's lives more bearable. She has someone to care for and listen to and he has an audience for his ideas and someone who encourages him to keep writing his book when he wants to abandon it.

Fulton not only likes McGee, but also admires her. To him she represents "things done; something that in facing [the world] and fighting and being beaten back had learned what is only to be learned that way" (361). In her he is "looking Experience in the face" (361). His

³⁰ Georgina Simes, Our Little Life (New York: Frederick A. Stokes, 1924), p. 8. All quotations used in the section dealing with Our Little Life are from this novel unless other indications are given.

admiration indicates that he is not happy with his lack of worldly experience and his isolation from life. Obviously he does not relish his self-imposed role as an artist in the tower. Fear and not inner detachment makes him prefer observing the world to participating in it. The fact that he asks McGee, symbol of "Experience" to judge his ideas shows that he recognizes the limits of observation. He knows that wider experience than his own is needed to write the book. Robert Fulton is, in other words, strongly attracted to the world, a fact indicating that he essentially belongs to the fount tradition.

Robert Fulton's book is an analysis of North American society. Because he feels ill-treated by this society he makes the book, with its sweeping and often unjust criticisms, an act of vengeance. When McGee tries to point out his errors he simply ignores her comments. However she admits, somewhat reluctantly, that his examination of the artist's position on this continent is essentially accurate.

Not surprisingly Fulton believes that "the New Worlds do mostly crush the artist out of a man" (256). The struggle for necessities allows little time for the appreciation of art and the development of talent. This struggle destroys the artist's and craftsman's "spontaneity and child-like intent pleasure in his work" (257), a fact illustrated by the career of McGee. Once an inspired dressmaker, she gradually becomes merely mechanically efficient. He maintains that artistic success "in the ordinary sense of the

word" (256) is impossible here and that in its place the creator must be satisfied with having "attained the power of looking things straight in the face" (256). In other words, the 'artist as creative visionary' will be replaced by the 'artist as realist,' that is, by "the artist in life" (256). Art will be submerged in life and will disappear as a specialized activity. Virtually the only remnant of the traditional artist will be the craftsman, the maker of practical things; even his creative spontaneity is doomed.

The only creators to survive in North America will be the "intellectual type of artist" (258). The exact meaning of this phrase is unclear. Fulton is possibly referring to artists such as himself - men in whom imaginative activities have been replaced by analysis and thought. As a result of their contact with a natural and social environment which requires a thoroughly realistic frame of mind they think analytically rather than imaginatively.

Another factor contributing to the demise of art in Canada is the artist's lack of identification with a particular class to which he belongs. Under the conditions of this continent class-consciousness is superseded by an awareness of individual personality, that is, self-consciousness. This is only natural in a highly competitive and individualistic society. Consequently the artist is "born again - out of a class and as an individual" (258), a development detrimental to art since the "love of work will die" (258) when the interest of the individual is transferred from his

creations to himself.

There is no room for both: a man cannot serve two masters. In the birth of self-consciousness art must go for a time (258)

The artist is incapable of devoting his energies and his interests to himself and to his work at the same time; since the New World is the realm of unbridled individualism it is inevitably art that suffers.

Despite his apparent pessimism Fulton sees that all these developments are not wholly bad. While art suffers the artist himself gains freedom.

He gains a sense of freedom in the New World, and in the escape from tradition and the routine of a narrow groove he also acquires a resourcefulness and a certain rough-and-ready adaptability that are of value. (258)

The artist will be able to live a better life than in Europe although his art will not be as great. Thus he is not entirely a loser in the New World.

Although Robert Fulton does not possess the confident and optimistic aura of a man who has achieved his goals he must be considered a successful artist. The reason for such a verdict is the fact that the creation of his book shows that he has overcome the retarding influence of the climate and society. In the face of overwhelming odds he has managed to create a work, something which Len Sterner, for example, was never able to do.

While land and climate play a part in the careers of Len Sterner, Richard Milne and Robert Fulton, they have no effect on the life of Paul Minas, the hero of Pierre

Coalfleet's Solo (1924). Minas fails as an artist but the reason for his demise is to be found in his strong-ego, or self. If for these terms one reads self-consciousness, then the theme of Solo is remarkably similar to one of the essential points made in Robert Fulton's book. Both works agree that the existence of self-consciousness is detrimental to the pursuit of art.

Paul Minas grows up in the Nova Scotian village of Hale's Turning where his ability in music, as well as in other subjects, alienates him from almost everyone. Unable to live with the uneducated and narrow-minded people of the community he runs away to sea. In his travels around the world he has to struggle desperately to survive. To protect his sensitive artistic nature he develops a hard outer shell which Coalfleet calls the ego. Since Paul is obliged to struggle continuously to defend himself the strength of this ego increases and soon its desires begin to suppress the artistic abilities it was originally supposed to shield. The ego's insatiable desire for adventure leads Paul from one corner of the globe to another seldom allowing him time to develop his talent.

Despite the fact that throughout most of his life Paul remains a slave to his ego, he fervently believes that it must not gain supremacy in the artist's mind. In his view the first task of the artist is to remove all traces of 'self' from his work. This belief marks him as belonging in the tower tradition. The result of failing to purify art of

the self is that it becomes conditioned by a certain historical era and consequently can never achieve universality. Nor can such art, the product of one particular, limited personality, ever appeal to the lofty spirit which he believes to be hidden in all men. On rare occasions, when Paul's ego vanishes in a mystical trance he is able to reach this spirit in even the least educated people. He finds that he can make rough sailors "forget the world of beer and ribaldry" (124) and show them "their kinship with the sublime wisdom and spirit of the universe."³¹ He believes that the artist is able to serve humanity by facilitating the spiritual regeneration of men. Minas does not however actively pursue this task.

Solo is interesting not only for its views regarding the nature of the artistic psyche but also for its portrayal of the artist as a political rebel. It is one of the few Canadian novels to present the artist in this capacity. Minas is jailed for his refusal to fight in World War One. War he believes is a negation of the spirit of universal brotherhood to which all art should appeal. He will not betray this spirit to which he has dedicated himself in order to satisfy the wishes of politicians. Insofar as the purpose of his art is to counteract the nationalistic policies that cause hatred among men it is revolutionary and

31

Pierre Coalfleet, Solo (London: J. Lane, the Bodley Head, 1924), p. 124.

opposed to the very existence of the state.

The bulk of Coalfleet's novel does not concern itself with the interesting issues touched on during the foregoing discussion. The major part of this book is devoted to his adventures in the world. These sections are often badly written and suffer from the excessive use of coincidences. They seriously lower the value of Coalfleet's often fascinating book.

Numerous artists are to be found in the 'Jalna novels' of Mazo de la Roche. The most important of these are Eden Whiteoak, a poet; his brother Finch, a musician; and a third brother, Wakefield, an actor and playwright. Besides these, several other minor artist-figures appear in the novels of this series. Although de la Roche has created

many artist-heroes one ultimately concludes that as artist-fiction, the value of her work is negligible. The major reason underlying such a decision is the fact that she consistently ignores opportunities to develop themes that would permit her to make a noteworthy contribution to this genre. An illustration of this tendency is her refusal to deal fully with Eden's relationship to nature.³² Some of his poetry is inspired by the natural world but de la Roche never really examines the particularities of his relationship with it. A similar statement may well be made about

³²This term is used because Eden is in no way dependent on the natural environment. See the Introduction if a clarification of this matter is desired.

her treatment of the artist's relationship to the land. She is content merely to note that when Finch is required to labor on the land, he does not create music.

For a terrible week he was subject to Piers, to his robust ragging, while his back ached, his palms blistered and he felt ready to drop from fatigue. No music those nights. A dead-beat stumbling to bed.³³

She does virtually nothing to develop the theme that is implicitly contained in these lines. De la Roche also declines to expand on the relationship between art and sex despite the fact that the numerous love affairs of her protagonists present opportunities for doing so. It should also be noted that although Finch and Wakefield are very religious artists de la Roche has little to say about any relationship between art and religion. The failure to deal adequately with these and still other themes is sufficient reason to deny Mazo de la Roche an important place in the history of Canadian artist-fiction.

A number of other artist-hero novels appeared in the years between 1920 and 1940. Coalfleet published Meanwhile (1927), "the story of a young Harvard-trained dilettante who dreams of becoming a great painter or writer."³⁴ He finally decides that his talents are fit only for becoming an advertising illustrator. Fred Jacob's Pee Vee (1928)

³³Mazo de la Roche, Whiteoaks (Toronto: Pan Books, 1971), p. 213. (Italics mine)

³⁴Carl F. Klinck, ed., Literary History of Canada, p. 684.

concerns Pierre Vincent (P.V.) McReady, a potential playwright who is diverted from his ambitions by the promise of easy success as a public speaker. Raymond Knister wrote a fictional biography of John Keats, entitled My Star Predominant (1934). The Paper Kingdom (1936) by Leslie Bishop deals with an "immigrant Irishman's attempts to establish a monthly literary magazine."³⁵ Francis Pollock's Jupiter Eight (1936) is a satire aimed at the artistic pretensions of Toronto as well as at writers whose only purpose is to earn money. In all probability still other artist-hero novels written in the two decades after 1920 may yet be found.³⁶

In assessing the artist-fiction produced between 1890 and 1940, one concludes that the most significant artist-novel of this period is Grove's The Yoke of Life. No work of artist-fiction preceding it and none until the appearance of Ross's As For Me and My House in 1941 is able to match the depth of its character portrayal or its powerful presentation of the artist's struggle to achieve his ambitions. On the basis of this fact one might consider Grove as the father of Canadian artist-fiction. Knister's and Sime's works are, in comparison to Grove's novel, decidedly minor achievements. White Narcissus shows in a

³⁵Ibid., p. 673.

³⁶This list of artist-novels is based on information provided by the Literary History of Canada.

less interesting way than The Yoke of Life the incompatibility between artistic ambitions and life on the land. Our Little Life is noteworthy mainly because of its presentation of the artist's problems in modern society.

Only one common theme - that of the conflict between the artist and the land - is distinguishable in the artist-fiction produced between 1920 and 1940. Both Len Sterner and Richard Milne are required to struggle against it in their efforts to fulfill their ambitions. No other major trends are observed in the artist-fiction of this time. The protagonists are evenly divided in their tendencies towards either the fount or the tower. Sterner and Minas are attracted to the latter, Milne and Fulton to the former. They are also evenly divided on the matter of success and failure. Milne and Fulton succeed while Sterner and Minas fail. It will be noted that the successful artists are drawn to the fount, a preference they will display throughout Canadian artist-fiction. No definite trend emerges in regard to the artist's feelings about modern society. Paul Minas and Robert Fulton are unsympathetic to it, Richard Milne seems to like it, and Len Sterner's feelings about it are ambivalent. With the exception of Richard Milne all of these artists lack satisfactory personal relationships with others.

The ways in which the imagination is employed may be classified as being either positive or negative. When the productions of this faculty are in serious conflict with reality, it is being used in a negative manner. Len Sterner

employs it in this way; his imagination denies certain aspects of reality instead of transforming them. A positive use of the imagination will never bring its creations into serious conflict with reality. Although in Milne's case nothing can be explicitly proven on this issue it is reasonable to assume on the basis of his vigorous attitude towards life that he uses this faulty in a positive manner. No trend is found in regard to the way in which the imagination is used by the artist-heroes appearing in the fiction at this time.

CHAPTER II

THE ARTIST-HERO FROM 1940 TO 1960

In the years between 1940 and 1960 several noteworthy artist-hero novels were published in Canada. Two of them, Sinclair Ross's As For Me and My House (1941) and Ernest Buckler's The Mountain and the Valley (1952) are generally considered to be among the best Canadian novels ever written. With the publication of Music at the Close (1947) this period witnessed the emergence of Edward McCourt, an author who has produced several novels belonging to the genre of artist-fiction. Unfortunately his works have been largely ignored; they receive scant attention in the Literary History of Canada (p. 712) and in Pacey's Creative Writing in Canada (p. 253). This neglect is unjustified because McCourt is the only Canadian author to have made the artist and persons with artistic temperaments the focal point of his fiction. Other artist-novels published during these years were Hugh McLennan's Two Solitudes (1944) and Vera Lysenko's Yellow Boots (1954).

In the view of this paper the three most important artist-novels produced during these years are The Mountain and the Valley, Music at the Close and As For Me and My House. Of the works available they contain the most convincing portraits of the artist and present his struggle

to realize his ambitions in the most interesting manner. A common idea found in these novels is that the land and the kind of society it produces are not beneficial to the artist, who should if he can, leave them behind. The protagonist of each work attempts to do so but only Philip Bentley of As For Me and My House succeeds in his efforts. Neil Fraser of Music at the Close and David Canaan of The Mountain and the Valley are unable to free themselves from the land.

Of the artist-heroes featured in these three books David Canaan is the least successful in his efforts to leave the land and the people who live on it. He is an extremely sensitive boy who lives in the Annapolis Valley with his parents. At a relatively early age he displays a desire to write; he keeps a scribbler in which he records his short-stories and his observations of the life around him. As he grows older he sees that because of his special talents he is unsuited to the land and that he should go somewhere else. However, he also loves the land and finds himself unable to do this. The only other person in the novel who is aware of this conflict in his feelings is his grandmother.

Whether, as it sometimes seemed, he had a love of this place as binding as blood, or, as it sometimes seemed, a hatred of it so dark and stubborn

as to fascinate him beyond the fascination of any possible kind of love, she didn't know.¹

While she sees the conflict as an either/or matter, the view of this paper is that both feelings are operative at the same time. His affection for the land is sufficiently powerful to prevent his departure while his negative feelings towards it never permit him to be comfortable in its presence.

David's love for the land is revealed by his sensitive response to it. Even as a child he is convinced that he has a special relationship to his natural surroundings.

He knew that if Toby found himself alone in the country it would have no language for him at all. Toby would never understand how the country spoke to him strongest when no one else was there. (140)

He would hardly believe that the land speaks to him in some way if he did not love it very deeply.

The negative elements in David's relationship to the land do not emerge until he is a young man. As a child he never encounters the demands made by the land because he is not allowed to work on it on account of his age. When he is finally required to help fulfill its demands he is quickly disillusioned with it. These negative feelings are clearly shown in the course of the 'stone episode,' when he and his father attempt to lift a huge stone out of the soil.

¹Ernest Buckler, The Mountain and the Valley (Toronto: McClelland and Stewart, 1966), p. 226. All quotations in the section dealing with The Mountain and the Valley are from this novel unless other indications are given.

David finds the work extremely difficult and his weariness translates itself into dissatisfaction with the land. He wonders why anyone would "spend their youth in this God-forsaken hole instead of the city" (162), and is angry with having to look at "the same damn coop of trees." (162) day in and out. He suddenly finds life on the land dull and monotonous. His sudden alienation from the land culminates in an intensely negative vision in which fatigue "[sucks] the voice out of the fields" (163). The voices of the land are of course associated with his positive relationship to it.

Last year's aftergrass lay withered and matted on the ground. Muddy water runnelled down the frost holes in the road. A dribble of excrement stained the white tail feathers of the Leghorns . . . The boards of the barn were bleached grey . . . The day had the sickly smell of scalded chicken feathers.
(163)

David seldom dwells with such concentration on the negative aspects of the land.

David's relationship to most of the inhabitants of the valley is as ambivalent as his attitude towards the valley itself. The existence of such a correspondence between the two kinds of relationships is to be expected since the inhabitants, such as his father who is an ideal prototype of the valley-dweller, are in some ways 'reflections' of the land. They are adjusted to it both mentally and physically and their minds and lives are shaped by its demands. Their level of consciousness is not highly developed. The fact that Joseph's "feelings [aren't]

word-shaped" (156) and that "there [is] no page in his mind or heart where their tracery [is] legible to himself" (156), indicates his relatively unconscious condition. David is of course very conscious, possessing "secret extra senses" (28) that differentiate him from the others. As the 'stone episode' makes clear these differences are a source of friction between them and himself. Not surprisingly he feels that his abilities are wasted among these people whose thoughts are confined to the affairs of the life in the valley.

What was the good of learning here? All they thought about was liftin' and luggin.' They thought if anyone was smart it was like being half-foolish. You had to cripple every damn thought you had, every damn thing you did, so they wouldn't look at your funny. In the city (163)

Only a part of what David thinks is true. His parents do not scorn his intelligence. His father is proud of it. However, the underlying essence of his claim is correct; he realizes that he has difficulty in adjusting to the mental level of the valley dwellers.

Although David's consciousness isolates him from his people he also feels close to them. He loves and admires his father above all others in the valley and strives to imitate him. His ambivalent attitude is expressed in a dream in which there are two of him, one walking alone and one walking with the others. This indicates that he feels simultaneously close to and distant from the people of the valley. He wants to participate in their lives and be

separate from them at the same time.

His desire for distance from the land is actively manifested in his bids to leave it for the city which, as his thoughts during the 'stone episode' show, attracts him. Although his various attempts to depart are unsuccessful the desire to do so never fades. Moreover, his later thoughts reveal his feeling that he has missed something in his life, things which his existence in the valley could not provide. At times he is convinced that "everything [has] gone by while he slept, down the road" (223) and that he will never be able to "catch up with it" (223). In other moments he feels strongly that "sometime, somewhere . . . everything [is] still waiting" (227). David wants experiences obtainable in the outside world. This is clearly demonstrated by his desire to take part in World War Two.

There had been a war but he hadn't been in it.
There had been things while he was alive and young
but they'd all been for other men. The trains had
all gone by. The grey smoke settled on the fields
and he was standing there alone with a hack. (276)

He panics at the thought that it is "always someone else" that things happen to . . ." (274). As he watches the train carry Toby to battle the enraged David takes a hack and destroys the turnips which he has been raising. At the sight of his lost opportunities he feels angry with the land which he has never been able to leave. A few moments after his destruction frenzy he attempts, vainly, to repair the damage he has done, showing thereby that he still feels some affection for the land. He cannot be callous to it

without a display of remorse.

The only one in the family who is aware of David's desire to depart from his surroundings is his grandmother. On the night of the 'stone episode' she makes her way into his room and gives him a locket containing the picture of a sailor whom she once sheltered. The sailor looks like David. Since a sailor is one who is always required to go away from those he loves, Ellen is obviously indicating to David, in a symbolic manner, that he should leave the farm. Later she wonders what would have happened to him had he left for "some place where he might have found the thing that was meant for him . . ." (226). However David ignores her message. In another symbolic gesture he gives the locket away to his friend Toby who becomes a seaman and gathers experiences of which David is extremely envious. When he watches the train carry his friend back to the war he feels a "blind hatred" (277) for him; it seems to him that in Toby he is seeing "his life stolen before his eyes" (277). Toby is in some ways to be regarded as David's alter-ego, the part of him that actually fulfills his desire to experience the world. Even at their first encounter there is "a curious identification between the two boys" (135). David regards his relationship with Toby as something special; he feels at ease to say things to him which he is compelled to "withhold from them" (135), the others on the farm. However he knows quite early in their friendship that they can never be exactly alike and that in

attempting to alter this situation he would only "betray himself" (146). Unfortunately as will be noted shortly, he never comes to a similar conclusion in regard to the differences between his father and himself.

David's desire for closeness to the land is expressed in his failure to leave it. His affection for his surroundings is sufficient to awaken in him the wish to overcome the mental and physical characteristics that make him unfit for life in the valley. He wants to communicate with his people, to participate in their lives when it should be obvious to him that there is no real common basis on which to build a close relationship with them.

Since the world to which David wants to relate himself is unsuited to him the relationship he establishes with it cannot be genuine. He seeks to achieve his aims by means of the 'false ideal.' He tries to become a 'natural' man like his father. Unfortunately David ignores the various warnings that his efforts are in vain. For example, he falls from a beam that his father or brother could have easily crossed. This incident leaves David with a scar and residual headache for the rest of his days. However, he does not interpret his fall as an admonition to cease his efforts to be something he is not. Although David later attains some proficiency at farming it is always, as his grandmother notes, "unnatural to him" (226). Despite his efforts he never even approaches his father's proficiency as a man of the land.

Because David tries to build a genuine relationship on a falsehood, something which cannot be done, he fails utterly in his attempts to participate in the life of the valley. He finds that instead of being in close contact with his people he is isolated from them. He realizes that his "loneliness [is] absolute" (228) and notes that "([there] was never any one of them he could easily talk to . . .)" (228). While watching the train carry Toby to the war he becomes fully aware of his situation.

I will always be a stranger to everybody, he thought - the others know that I don't know what any of their things is like. My own life brimmed and emptied so soon, and I could never fill it again. (275)

David sinks so deeply into isolation that after a time it becomes "self-willed" (228). He finds that "[because] he [is] lonely, there [is] a self-biting satisfaction in deliberately making himself lonelier still" (228). This statement indicates again that the urge to be apart from the valley is operative even in the midst of his attempts to join it. The wish for distance manifests itself in his later years not in efforts to leave but in deliberate self-isolation. Although the people of the valley at first come to visit him, he never goes "into their houses at all" (228). "At first the neighbors couldn't believe that he preferred to be alone" (228). He builds a wall around himself and discovers later much to his amazement, that he is no longer able to tear it down.

He saw then that the unquestioned premise all his calculations had been built on was false. He realized for the first time that his feet must go their present path, because all the crossroad junctions had been left irretrievably far behind. Anything your own hands had built, he had always thought, your own hands could destroy. You could build a wall about yourself, for safety's sake, but whenever you chose you could level it. That wasn't true, he saw now. After a while you could beat against the wall all you liked, but it was indestructible. The case of loneliness became pitted in your flesh. It was as plain for others to see and shy away from as the slouch of a convict. (274-275)

He finally realizes that he is unable to take part in the life of the valley and that he has lost every opportunity for participating in the wider life of the world.

The pursuit of the 'false ideal' inspired by his love for the valley and its people not only fails to bring David into a satisfactory relationship with the inhabitants but also prevents him from developing his creative potential. He exhausts his energy in vain attempts to live up to his father's achievements when he should have expended it on his artistic talents. David first becomes aware of these abilities while recovering from his fall from the beam. He finds that words are able to bring him into closer contact with things.

Suddenly he knew how to surmount everything. That loneliness he'd always had . . . it got forgotten, maybe, weeded over, but none of it had ever been conquered . . . There was only one way to possess anything: to say it exactly. Then it would be outside you, captured and conquered. (195)

Words related to 'possession' and 'conquest' occur frequently in this episode; they refer to the contact with

things provided by creativity. He feels that the whole world "clamored to be known exactly and so possessed" (201). Creativity is thus able to relate David to the world on the basis of his intellectual and artistic gifts, in a manner proper to his nature. Unfortunately David does not attempt to solve the problem of his relationship to the valley and its inhabitants by means of his artistic abilities. He tries to relate himself to them as a man of the land instead of as an artist. In other words he seeks a human and not an imaginative relationship to the land and its people. The pursuit of this kind of relationship keeps him in an unsuitable environment and depletes his energy. Had he left the land as his impulses commanded he might have been able to establish a suitable human relationship and thereby retained sufficient energy to develop an imaginative relationship to those whom he loves but cannot live with. A different environment might also have provided him with the experiences he wants and perhaps needs in order to develop his creative potential.

Exhausted by the struggle with the land David begins the journey to the mountain that he has always wanted to visit. On the way up he encounters Steve, a local farmer to whom he talks for a few minutes. Two occurrences during this meeting foreshadow certain aspects of David's mystical experience on the mountain. During the conversation David's mind "[suspends] its own nature" (283) and identifies itself with

Steve's.² As a result of this he is able to take the farmer's vague thoughts and unexpressed wishes and give them a voice, define them. David later finds that the definition of other's nebulous ideas will be one of his tasks as an artist. The theme of identification also plays an important part in his later experience.

In his experience on the mountain David discovers that there is a "thread of unity running through the whole world" (287). All things are identified with each other. David in particular will be identified if he describes them; he sees that he could "become the thing [he] told" (298). Thus it is art that will identify him with things, and bring him into a close relationship with them. Not only is there a unity in things but in time as well. The doors to the past are not permanently sealed and he can relive the events of his life. During this experience David finally resolves to become "the greatest writer in the whole world" (299). His mission in this capacity will be not only to elucidate the similarities between things but also to clarify the thoughts of "all the faces" (295) or people in the world. This he has already done for Steve. Despite the universal nature of this intention he resolves to focus his abilities upon the people in the valley. In his books he plans to show the world that "there is more to them [the

²It should not be thought that David's ability to imaginatively identify himself with such people as Steve indicates that he can also live happily among them.

valley-dwellers] than the side that shows" (300). He will also heal their wounds, give "an absolving voice to all the hurts they [give] themselves or each other" (300). Thus, as a result of his experience David finds a way to relate himself to the valley he loves, and the world he desires, as an artist, in a manner proper to his being. His relationship with people will be based primarily on his imaginative activities in which they will play an important role. He will take part in the life of the valley not as a farmer but as an artist.

Unfortunately none of David's ambitions can ever come to pass since he dies on the mountain. This event is not merely a tragic circumstance striking him without due cause but is clearly the result of his weak heart being exhausted by the long pursuit of the 'false ideal.' Thus his love for the land, and his attempt to relate to it in an improper manner destroys him. Some readers may doubt that David would have become a writer even if he had survived the trip up the mountain. To them he is a mere daydreamer and not an artist at all. He only wants to be "the greatest writer" (298), in the same way that as a child he wants to be "the greatest actor in the whole world" (82). He is indulging in wishful thinking. This view is not entirely implausible. A daydreamer is after all a person whose plans have no foundation in reality, and David does not seem to possess the strong will needed to become a famous writer. However it should be noted

that the experience on the mountaintop might be powerful enough to change him in this respect. Moreover the notebooks in which he diligently writes his stories and observations show that he is not completely without will in the pursuit of art. These notebooks indicate that he is a potential artist. The fact that David is so sensitive and observant also argues in favor of the latter interpretation of his character.

Little is explicitly said about David's relationship to modern society and its ways since he seldom comes into contact with it. During one visit to a small town he finds that he "[despises] most of the town people . . ." (200); in his view they are shallow, narrow-minded and excessively involved in petty complexities. It should be noted that he distinguishes between the inhabitants of towns and cities. At least some of the latter have, in his opinion, a certain depth of character. Thus he does not see the city as necessarily having a detrimental affect on people. David as a matter of fact feels he "[has] an affinity" (200) with city dwellers the origin of which he himself is at a loss to understand. While he appears to be favorably disposed to the city, he looks askance at the importation of city ways into the valley. He realizes that in a rural area they are sure to be, and look, like imitations. But pursuing what is not natural to them the people on the land become "dilute" (229). David refuses to indulge in such pretences. His intellectual ability, the "extra sense" (229) keeps him "parallel"

(229) with the "true spirit of the changing times" (229); he is not dependent on "participation" (229) to understand what is happening. The last statement should not mislead the reader into believing that he does not want participation in the world. While he may be able to understand the world without it, participation is what he seeks so desperately both in the valley and in the outside realms.

David's strong desire for participation in the life of the valley and the world is a characteristic of the artist in the fount tradition. However, certain traits proper to the artist in the tower tradition are also his. The belief in the unity of all things and the ability to efface himself and enter the mind of another is common to such artists. The extremely strong presence of characteristics belonging to both kinds of artists indicates that, had he lived, he might have unified the two traditions. This would have made him a rare specimen among Canadian artist-heroes.

David's intended use of the imagination is entirely positive. He wants to employ it as a means of clarifying the thoughts of others and to reveal their relationship to all things. He obviously has no intention of using the imagination to deny any part of reality as Len Sterner attempts to do.

According to D.O. Septtigue The Mountain and the Valley shows the "failure of creativity from a lack of

focus."³ This paper is in agreement with his view. Although David makes some attempts to develop his abilities he does not concentrate sufficiently on this task. He diffuses his energy in the pursuit of the 'false ideal' and consequently his talents are unable to realize their full potential. For this reason one must conclude that as an artist he is a failure.

While David Canaan does not leave the land because he always feels some love for it, Neil Fraser, the hero of Edward McCourt's Music at the Close gradually comes to hate the land. Despite his early affection for the prairie he later struggles desperately to escape it. Unlike David, Neil nearly succeeds in these endeavors, but he too is ultimately trapped in an environment that is incompatible with his artistic ambitions.

The positive elements of Neil's relationship to the land-as-environment are predominant in his younger years. Much like other boys he avidly explores his surroundings. He is a strong healthy child, physically well-suited to his locale. As a young man he even considers becoming a farmer and displays considerable pride in his acreage. He is not isolated from his community, attends many of its social functions, and for a while he is a local baseball hero.

Neil shows outright hostility towards the land-as-environment only after returning from his travels during

³D.O. Spettigue, "The Way It Was" Canadian Literature, 32 (Spring 1967), 50.

the Depression. However the roots of his negative attitude towards the land can be found in his first experiences with the prairie. Upon his arrival from Ontario he sees a grim landscape, hot and dusty, marked by "stunted"⁴ pools of "stagnant water" (17). Instinctively he compares this environment to a desert and fearing sunstroke keeps his hat on. His negative, fearful response to the land reaches crisis proportions that same evening. In bed, trembling at the "haunting wail of the coyote" (23), "appalled" (23) by the vast darkness around him he tries to imagine the comforting presence of his dead mother. He finds however that "his imagination [is] not strong enough to triumph over the reality" (23) of the environment and his situation. It fails to assuage his fear of loneliness and the prairie. This incident is important in understanding the workings of his imagination. He will not accept, quite naturally for one so young, the fact that his mother is dead and he tries to imagine that she is beside him. He attempts to use it to negate reality. Neil never outgrows this habit of the childhood imagination; he always desires to force his dreams upon situations and people which are not suited to them. In the words of R.G. Baldwin, his dreams are

⁴Edward McCourt, Music at the Close, Toronto: McClelland and Stewart, 1966), p. 15. All quotations used in the section dealing with Music at the Close are from this novel unless other indications are given.

"superimposed on experience rather than nurtured by it."⁵ His plans and the creations of his imagination are opposed to reality instead of being built on it. He prefers not to deal with reality. This characteristic reveals an escapist tendency in Neil's imagination that is also found in his life. He often runs away rather than face unpleasant situations: as a child he flees the school room instead of taking his punishment; he leaves the farm instead of facing his failure there; and later, rather than deal with his marital problems, he goes away to war.

The discovery of literature plays an important part in changing Neil's view of the land and those who live there. After this event he suddenly finds that his neighbors are dull "undistinguished in appearance or accomplishment" (56). He finds too that he is "not really interested in farming" (77) and tells a friend that he does not believe that "the farm is the only life" (88). Inevitably he dreams of becoming a writer and thinks "a great deal of himself . . . in the role of an author" (82). He begins to write poetry and at university he spends "the greater part of each history lecture hour" (115) composing verses. One of his markers tells him that he has some writing ability, which indicates that his dream is, in this case, not without foundation. Although Neil is not a successful student and is not sorry to have to return to the land when his uncle dies,

⁵R.G. Baldwin, "Pattern in the Novels of Edward McCourt," Queen's Quarterly, 68. (Winter 1962), p. 582.

he has no intention of dedicating himself to farm work. Knowing that a life of service to the land will not permit him to pursue his ambitions he plans to harvest crops of wheat that will bring him to "the threshold of wealth" (135) and leave him independent of the land. When this is accomplished he intends to "retire and write" (135) his ultimate aim being to "[write] in the summer and go to college in the winter" (135). This scheme to free himself from the land has no realistic basis. Neil should have known that his chances of succeeding are minimal since so many, dedicated to the land, have failed. Obviously he has not profited from the experiences of others. When he is finally forced to admit that his plan is doomed Neil, tries to free himself from the necessity of serving the land by investing in the stockmarket. He loses all of his money in 1929. After renting the farm to a friend he leaves it to seek his fortune elsewhere. During his travels he encounters and marries Moira Glenn who insists that Neil, despite his hatred for farming, return to the land. Seeing that there is no other way to live decently he reluctantly does so.

Before him stretched the prospect of a dreary round of days in the field, of endless chores, endless jobs around the house and barn . . . The kind of life that Neil had always dreamed of--a life of travel, reading, music, writing--had become impossibly remote. And his heart was filled with bitterness. (171)

Neil realizes that the demands of the land, to which he is held by his family, allow him little time or energy for writing. His only real interest is in escaping the farm.

At one point he plans to go to the Peace River where life is supposedly easier but Moira vetoes this plan as unrealistic. Thus he is held to an environment the demands of which make the achievement of his artistic ambitions impossible.

Neil does not really develop an imaginative relationship to the land. Unlike Len Sterner he makes no serious effort to 'reshape' or 'recreate' the land by means of the imagination. Evidence of a mere half-hearted attempt to do this is to be found in his vision of the land across the river as "Ultima Thule" (37). He fails to develop this vision to any noteworthy extent.

Although Neil fails to 'recreate' the land, he does imaginatively 'reshape' other persons. Dissatisfied with the dullness of most of those around him and spurred on by his "instinct for hero-worship" (56) he transforms certain people with whom he has only slight contact into idols before whom he stands in awe. While a child the focal point of these efforts is Charlie Steele, a remittance man who once lends him books, and Helen Martel, the married sister of his friend Gil Reardon. These two carry on an illicit love-affair. Stimulated by his reading of Tennyson Neil fuses them with characters from Idylls of the King: "[when] Guinivere and Launcelot rode together they looked for all the world like Helen Martel and Charlie Steele" (57). However his vision is doomed because it is not suited to the situation and environment to which it is applied. Beyond

adultery Launcelot and Steele have nothing in common. Neil is attributing to Charlie a nobility that he does not really possess but which Neil would like him to have; he is 'super-imposing' on reality. His "idealized conception" (75) of Charlie is shattered by the reality of that person "sprawled in a huddled heap" (75) under some pines. Moreover it should be noted that he does not really feel the loss of "Charlie Steele as he had really been in life" (75) as much as the loss of his own image of the man. His personal relationship to Charlie is less important than his imaginative recreation of him.

Another person whom Neil idolizes is his English professor at university. Although warned by other students that he is unpleasant, it is not long before Neil is "close to worshipping the man" (105). This exalted image, "super-imposed" on the experience of others is destroyed when the professor humiliates Neil. Here, as with Charlie, the imagination has interfered with his perception of reality and prevented an accurate assessment of the man.

Neil not only uses his imagination to idolize and 'recreate' others, he also uses it to compensate for his poor relationships with them. This is especially true of women, of whom he is afraid. The dreams of heroism inspired by Charlie and Helen are sadly incapable of moving him to action. While Gil Reardon provides Moira Glenn with the kind of attention she wishes Neil merely dreams of a love affair with her, of their sexual experiences and of

her pride at his academic successes. He relates himself to her in a wholly imaginative manner and makes no attempt to display his real feelings. He is involved with Moira the object of his imagination and not with the real person.

Although Moira only inspires dreams of a personal relationship with her she also encourages him to study. In this sense she is a muse. However even here to some extent it is his image of her, lost in admiration for his achievements that drives him on. He attributes her with more love for intellectual accomplishments than she actually has. The real person respects his aspirations but not sufficiently to suffer even temporary neglect on their behalf.

When Moira, the inspirational imaginary lover becomes Moira, the wife, her effect is to hinder the achievement of his ambitions. She has no intention of putting "Art before Bread" (193) as he would like to do. She pressures him into returning to the farm, maintaining that it is the only sensible thing to do. Although to him the farm means an end to his dreams of "a life of travel, reading, music, writing" (171) to her it means an opportunity of making a decent living during the Depression. It is to be noted that while his dream of a wholly 'aesthetic' life-style is not based on an accurate assessment of reality, his feeling that work on the land will not allow him to develop his abilities is correct and realistic. As a result of his ambitions a state of tension arises between them; Moira tries to make him spend more time on the farm, while he tends to

ignore it in order to develop his talents. The arrival of Ian, as Neil knows, marks the end of any possibility of escaping from the farm in order to achieve his goals.

There was no escape now and he knew it. He was chained to the farm come good or evil. And in his heart there was neither peace nor resignation--only bitterness against the woman who indirectly had helped to fashion his chains. (187)

He feels "instinctive resentment against the child who [has] become the visible symbol of enslavement" (188). Neil also shows his dislike for the child by shutting him out of his study, which he regards as a "sanctuary from the distraction that always reigned elsewhere in the house" (192). After much thought Neil realizes that he must choose between writing and supporting his family by farm work. Realistically he chooses the latter. To the obvious delight of Moira he burns his manuscripts and promises to write no more. Therefore he will no longer need to divide his time and energies between his artistic ambitions and the demands of the land. His family, which he must support, holds him to the land which will not permit the development of artistic potential. Together they help to destroy his creative abilities.

With the end of his ambitions Neil's relationship to his son improves although evidence of resentment can still be seen in the fact that he occasionally beats him with unnecessary severity. However his relationship to Moira deteriorates. She begins to enjoy the attentions of George Meeker. Neil's pain gives way to fear as he recalls that a similar situation ended in the death of Helen

Martel's husband and Charlie Steele. Having realized that he has "lost her" (202) Neil wants to kill George Meeker. Another murder is probably averted only by his enlistment at the start of World War Two. For him the opening of hostilities offers "a way of escape from difficulties that . . . [threaten] to destroy him" (215). The war permits him to avoid the necessity of having to face his marital problems. Neil's tendency to avoid dealing with his problems has already been noted.

Gil Reardon is the only person with whom Neil establishes a genuine personal relationship in which the imagination does not interfere. At no time does he seriously attempt to idolize his friend. Gil is also the only person who makes a positive contribution to Neil's life. During the time that they are associated with a band of rebellious miners Gil explains his "[faith] in mankind" (156) to him. Neil experiences such a faith in the demonstration in which Gil is killed. He sees that although the miner's actions are "an aimless, futile, exhausting exercise" (158) they manifest man's eternal desire for freedom. On the basis of this experience Neil finds a way to identify himself with all of mankind instead of merely with a particular society or nation. This faith sustains him during his last hours on earth. Dying on the Normandy beaches, he concludes that despite his failure to be a writer his life still has value because he has "however blindly, however unwillingly" (217) contributed to human freedom. He is carried away by this

realization and even repudiates his old dreams (those connected with his artistic ambitions) as "false" (216). This repudiation seems more than anything else to be an attempt to comfort himself for having lost them. His faith in mankind may be genuine but one may reasonably doubt his honesty with himself when he denies the dreams that have guided him for so long.

There can be no doubt that Neil Fraser fails as an artist. At the time of his death he has not even remotely approached the achievement of his ambitions. Numerous reasons can be found to explain his failure. In many respects he is a victim of modern society and its upheavals; the stockmarket crash destroys his plans for becoming independent of the land and the impossibility of getting a different job forces him back onto the farm. There he finds it impossible to fulfill the demands of the land and to write at the same time. However he too is partly to blame for his lack of success. He should not have allowed the imagination to interfere with his assessment of such people as Professor Gregson and Moira Glenn. This interference prevents him from seeing these people for what they are. In his images of them he provides them with characteristics they do not have. This is indeed a childish habit of the imagination. Neil's imagination has, in some ways, simply not grown up. His attempts to live by images and dreams, and not by reality are important elements in his failure to achieve his goals.

Because Neil tries to live by his dreams rather than by reality it might be said that he is a mere daydreamer. Such a view however ignores the fact that Neil has writing ability and that he strives to develop it. One must therefore, in the last analysis, see him as a potential artist even though he is a man who uses his talents in an immature manner.

Neil Fraser displays characteristics of both the tower and the fount. His participation in the life of the community during his youth and his belief in the value of his part in mankind's struggle for freedom place him in the fount tradition. Moreover he does not display any tendency to efface himself or any desire to overcome his human limitation. On the other hand he is "troubled by vague inexplicable longings" (75) that tend to leave him dissatisfied with reality as he finds it. While a child he imagines that he catches glimpses of "blue distances reaching . . . beyond the borders of the world itself" (48). Such feelings are characteristic of artists with predilections for the tower. Neil tries to escape from the world in which he lives in various, often childish, ways. One should not however be deceived by the immature outward form of these efforts which show that like any artist in the tower tradition, he wants to transcend the limits of this world.

McCourt has written four other novels that may be classified as artist-fiction. These are Home is the Stranger (1950); The Wooden Sword (1956); Walk Through the

Valley (1958) and Fasting Friar (1963).⁶ The protagonists of the first three works are highly imaginative people who do not create anything, while the main character of the last novel is a sensitive scholar whose creativity is manifested in his articles. This novel also contains a writer, Paul Ettinger, whose pornographic book touches off the academic feud in which the scholarly Ackroyd becomes involved. However, Ettinger's personality does not play a major role in the events that take place. In each of these novels the problems faced by the protagonist are in some way connected with the land which is either the prairie or an area bordering it. This is also true of Music at the Close. It would appear therefore that the theme of the sensitive or imaginative person's relationship to the prairie is a unifying element in McCourt's novels. Another unifying theme is that of the imagination's interference in the perception of reality. In many of McCourt's novels these two themes are developed in close conjunction with one another. R.G. Baldwin also notes that many of McCourt's novels (He does not deal with Fasting Friar.) are unified by themes related to the imagination. He points out that they often concern themselves with "issues that turn on the place of dreams, and the imagination and romantic aspirations in the world

⁶Fasting Friar has been republished as The Ettinger Affair.

of reality."⁷

Norah Armstrong, the heroine of Home is the Stranger has an imagination so powerful that she is unable to keep it under control. For this reason she is often the victim of "imagination's fantastic deceits."⁸ Her imagination attributes fictitious characteristics of the land in the same way that Neil Fraser's imposes on others traits which they do not possess. Consequently Norah is unable to adapt herself to the land as it really is, or in more general terms, to reality. An additional problem is caused by the fact that her imagination intensifies each of her fears to the point where she is no longer able to cope with them in a rational manner.

Norah's problems with the land begin when she first arrives from Ireland. She finds the prairie "primitive, barbaric; hostile to man's encroachment" (96). Even its vastness is repugnant to her. The negative reaction to the land-as-environment gives birth to her negative imaginative relationship to it. She believes that man is at the mercy of capricious prairie gods. In other words Norah is attributing wilful evil intentions to the land when in fact it is merely inhospitable to man in a casual way. Her

⁷R.G. Baldwin, "Pattern in the Novels of Edward McCourt," 578.

⁸Edward McCourt, Home is the Stranger, (Toronto: McClelland and Stewart, 1950), p. 89. All quotations in the section dealing with Home is the Stranger are from this novel unless other indications are given.

difficulties in adapting to the prairie is understandable in view of her belief that it is, in her eyes inhabited by malicious gods.

When Norah is left alone during a snowstorm the uncontrolled imagination drives her mad. It intensifies each fear and creates new dangers from remote possibilities. She also begins to fancy herself a special victim of the prairie gods who "had waited until she . . . was alone" (187) before assailing her. She panics and finally commits adultery in order to keep someone with her during the night. She interprets the death of her son as God's punishment for her misdeed. It is obvious that the imagination's influence on her perception prevents her from accurately assessing her circumstances and from acting in a rational manner in regard to them. Later, while recovering in hospital she decides to "make terms with the earth" (268) since her husband's happiness depends on her doing so. She will have to learn how to control the imagination.

During his childhood Steven Venner, the protagonist of The Wooden Sword has a problem similar to the one faced by Norah Armstrong. He too suffers as a result of an excessively powerful imagination which magnifies each fear and thereby makes him a coward. The hills near his home are a special source of terror. To him they are an "[alive] and

remote and frightening,"⁹ audience to his moments of cowardice. His wish for a land without hills, his reading of the Old Testament and his contact with an uncle who fought in Middle East during the First World War, all serve to inspire his love for the desert. Later he identifies the desert with the "golden plain of his childhood dreams" (72) where his wish to be courageous could come true. Important too in his love for the desert is its ability to "[swallow] up the men and their works" (15); it erases all trace of human action. Although the prairie is like the desert in many ways he hates it for being "open to the eyes of all men" (17). Unlike the desert it cannot bury all traces of a man's deeds or misdeeds.

Despite Steven's love for the desert a "cloud" (15) covers all memories of his wartime experiences there. Painful self-analysis reveals to him that in the "golden plain" where he had thought he could be brave he had been a coward as well as a hero. Because he refuses to recognize his cowardice, the "cloud" also conceals his heroism. After facing up to the fact that he has been a coward he is able to begin leading a normal existence again. One assumes that he will no longer hate the prairie and that in the future he will carefully control the activities of his

⁹ Edward McCourt, The Wooden Sword, (Toronto: McClelland and Stewart, 1956), p. 71. All quotations in the section dealing with The Wooden Sword are from this novel unless other indications are given.

imagination.

Walk Through the Valley tells the story of a boy who outgrows the dreams that have no basis in reality and who begins to see the world as it is. At the end of the novel he no longer attributes ("imposes") characteristics, such as the existence of Finn McCuil, upon the world. He learns to live by reality and not by the products of the imagination. Since the protagonist of this novel is a child one sees clearly that McCourt identifies the 'imposing' imagination with childhood.

The main character of this story, is Michael Troy, another highly imaginative child who is well acquainted with many legendary heroes. The imagination plays an important role in the life of his family; his father Dermot often neglects his farmwork to tell them stories. The favorite is that of the stag in the nearby valley, who is supposedly Finn McCuil, the Irish folk-hero. Michael's childish imagination takes these stories literally and he often goes to hunt the stag. Taking action in regard to these stories shows that he cannot clearly distinguish between fiction or dream and reality. Although this distinction is not yet perfectly clear to him he feels the beginnings of a conflict between reality and the imagination. He occasionally finds that he is unable "to go on thinking about things the

way [he] wanted to."¹⁰ His growing awareness of reality tends to dispel his reveries. He finds it increasingly difficult to shape the world in his own way, to provide it with attributes it does not possess.

Michael's first sexual experiences and more important, the arrival of Blaze Corrigan, put an end to his childish imagination. Corrigan is a "figure of dreams," (81) akin to Robin Hood. Michael's father becomes involved in whiskey-running with this outlaw. The situation in which the Troy family finds itself is that of an exciting story-book. However with the arrival of the police and an attempted murder the romance begins to fade. The affair ends with the death of Dermot. Michael is hurt not only by the death of his father but also by the loss of his dream world in which such events are romantic and not tragic. The childhood imagination disappears forever while he stands on a summit overlooking the valley where he 'hunted' McCuill. He sees the stag for the last time; after that moment he is faced with "the valley and the bare hill-top and the far grey sky" (221). He sees the world as it is. The loss of the childhood imagination is however compensated for by the knowledge that having bravely withstood the demise of its dreams he has gained the strength

¹⁰ Edward McCourt, Walk Through the Valley, (Toronto: McClelland and Stewart, 1958), p. 27. All quotations in the section dealing with Walk Through the Valley are from this novel unless other indications are given.

"to defy the worst that life could do to him" (221).

McCourt's latest novel, Fasting Friar differs from the three previous ones. The protagonist does not suffer from uncontrolled imaginative activity but has channelled this faculty's power into the writing of his highly valued scholarly articles. As a matter of fact he is extremely distrustful of imaginative activities such as writing novels which are not rigorously disciplined.

However Ackroyd is not an insensitive man as the previous statements might suggest. He is in fact overly sensitive to the influence of the prairie surrounding the university. He fears the prairie; the "great loneliness of empty space"¹¹ is to him the "visible expression" (11) of "sinister powers" (11). Because the wide spaces make him feel unprotected he develops a liking for walls. In one sense the university is to him a physical wall against the prairie environment; in another sense it is also one the spiritual walls Ackroyd erects to protect him from the 'vastness' of life and the world. He uses the excuse of academic activities to avoid close contact with most people. Like Neil Fraser and Steven Venner he prefers books to others. However he uses work and not daydreams as a way of avoiding the world.

¹¹Edward McCourt, Fasting Friar, (Toronto: McClelland and Stewart, 1963), p. 150. All quotations in the section dealing with Fasting Friar are from this novel unless other indications are given.

As Ackroyd involves himself in the conflict for academic freedom he discovers that the walls erected against others confine him to a "great loneliness of empty space" (150) equal to that of the prairie. Gradually he takes the lead in the struggle over an allegedly pornographic book and at the same time becomes increasingly intimate with the author's unhappy wife. He wins the academic feud and at the end of the novel it is hinted that he and the author's wife will eventually marry.

In assessing McCourt's four later artist-novels one concludes that on the whole they do not match the quality of his first work. Full explanation of this view is beyond the scope of this paper but several reasons may briefly be noted. Both Home is the Stranger and Walk Through the Valley seem to digress somewhat from their main concerns; the first becomes a rescue drama during which Norah almost vanishes from sight and the second tends to become a 'cops and robbers' affair. The Wooden Sword suffers from too much self-analysis and the excessive amount of detail concerning academic disputes distracts the reader. Fasting Friar also loses by too many details of university feuds; moreover many of its characters are not wholly plausible.¹² However in viewing these flaws one should not lose sight of the fact that McCourt is the first Canadian writer to

¹² McCourt's weaknesses in style, plot and characterization have been pointed out by Desmond Pacey's Creative Writing in Canada, p. 253.

consistently concern himself with artists, and persons with artistic temperaments. His work is made even more valuable by his attempts, intentional or not, to formulate a 'doctrine' of the imagination. The belief underlying many of his novels is that the imagination is a dangerous faculty which must be carefully controlled lest it interfere with a person's ability to live effectively. He seems to distrust the imagination. Unfortunately McCourt does not develop this view in his novels; he is content to apply it to various situations. Nor does he ever present a character who controls the imagination in a proper manner. The lack of such a protagonist makes it impossible for the reader to know what McCourt would consider a wise use of the imagination. Nevertheless the fact that he has even attempted to present a 'doctrine' of the imagination makes him a unique figure among writers of Canadian artist-fiction. The value of his attempt should be recognized by all.

Sinclair Ross's first novel, As For Me and My House (1941) is another portrait of an unsuccessful artist although by the end of the story there is hope that Philip Bentley, the painter, may overcome his years of failure and achieve his ambitions. However the reason for his failure is not his relationship to the land-as-environment as was the case with many of the protagonists in the two previously examined works. As a matter of fact, Bentley is not involved in a direct relationship with the land. He does

not have to fulfill any of its demands.¹³ He is born and raised in a small prairie town and earns his living as a preacher in similar communities. Ironically enough a major source of his failure lies in his unshakable desire to be an artist. This dream is originally inspired by his father, a student minister whose illegitimate son Philip is, and whom he knew only for a few months. As Philip became older the ambition to paint apparently grew increasingly intense; he became (18) convinced that he was "meant to paint."¹⁴ In order to realize his dream he felt the need to leave his surroundings and he found that the "church offered itself as at least one step away from the prairie town where he had spent his boyhood" (18). Despite his disbelief in the religious teachings he will eventually have to disseminate Philip joins the church, planning to repay the advantage it has offered him with a few years of service. However this plan, described by his wife as "practicable" (3) and which according to her might have succeeded, is foiled by their marriage. The responsibilities conferred by his new status made it difficult for Philip to leave the church, which

¹³Even though he is not obligated to fulfill the demands of the land Philip Bentley is still indirectly dependent on the land. His wages depend on the success or failure of the farmer's crops. Because he is rather dependent on the natural environment the term 'land' is used in dealing with As For Me and My House.

¹⁴Sinclair Ross, As For Me and My House, (Toronto: McClelland and Stewart, 1964), p. 18. All quotations in the section dealing with As For Me and My House are from this novel unless other indications are given.

provided much needed financial support. For a time he even tried writing fiction in order to free himself from his obligations but this plan also failed because, according to her, "the artist in him was uppermost" (33). Instead of making the story "popular and salable" (33), he writes it the way he thinks it should be written. The result is that he is not only exhausted from his writing but is also obliged to remain in a church which he essentially despises, preaching and doing things in which he does not believe. As a painter he has failed, and, as Mrs. Bentley tells us, "every minute of the day he's mindful of it" (16). The only remaining evidence of his great ambition are the sketches and drawings, "cold little ghosts of his dream" (33), that he produces behind the locked door of his study.

The years of hypocrisy necessitated by his duties have had an extremely adverse effect upon Philip and his art. His wife informs the reader that the "constant sense of deceit and hypocrisy has been a virus, destroying his will and sapping his energy" (67). The development of his art reflects the fact of his gradually declining vitality. After looking at an evening sky marked by "bright little flecks of red and gold" (23) Mrs. Bentley notes that Philip painted such "incredible clouds" (23) in the days before his ordination, after which he lost "the enthusiasm and zest for such things" (23). Instead in his drawings he now concentrates, with only a few exceptions, on the drab, gray, dust-choked prairie towns, the scenes of his failure, and

the outer images of his spiritual condition. The mood and tone of his paintings also reflect the decline of his vigor and energy. Mrs. Bentley informs the reader that his drawings "with every year become a little colder and grimmer" (64) as life and warmth gradually fade from his spirit. His emotional range as a result of his ebbing vitality is also gradually narrowing itself. The predominant mood of the majority of his pictures may be described as negative, connected with feelings of sadness, futility, desperation, defiance and on occasion, hatred. Pictures expressing joy, tenderness and love of life are rare, as are such moods in him.

Philip Bentley's hypocrisy and fading emotional life are reflected in one of his two aesthetic theories. He tells his wife that she should turn a picture upside down since this will remove "all the sentiment" (154), that is, all human emotion. Moreover, doing so leaves only the "design and form" (154). This phrase is an apt description of his life as a minister, which is pure form, without the slightest shred of devotional content.

The compromise made by Philip holds him in an environment which he hates and which he had sought by means of the church to leave. As a young man he had found the attitude of the small town in which he lived not only hostile to him on account of his illegitimacy but also too cramped spiritually for his growing mind, filled as it was with difficult and often only half-understood notions from

his father's books. The communities in which he later finds himself are no more conducive to spiritual growth than was his home town. In his article "Wind, Sun and Dust" Donald Stevens writes that "the intellectual celibacy of the townspeople is made poignantly clear in the light of their ceaseless struggle against the overwhelming odds of the climate."¹⁵ Places such as Horizon, set as they are against the vast power of the essentially hostile land, are in a defensive posture; their citizens are narrow-minded because their struggle with the prairie has left them dogmatically opposed to anything that could change the customs, institutions and ideas by means of which they have survived. Even a display of charity cannot induce them to change any facet of their ways. Their hostile attitude to Philip's aid to a Catholic orphan, Steven, illustrates this. No spiritual growth beyond the already attained limits is possible without incurring the enmity of the town. Philip, who is not so narrow-minded as the citizens, can neither comfortably exist nor develop himself within the strictures decreed by the town. Sandra Djwa, in her article "No Other Way" is aware of the incompatibility between Philip and Horizon.¹⁶ She says that he and his wife "must get away from the kind of world the small town of Horizon imposes to a community

¹⁵ Donald Stevens, "Wind, Sun, and Dust," Canadian Literature, 23 (Winter 1965), 19.

¹⁶ Sandra Djwa, "No Other Way," Canadian Literature, 47 (Winter 1971).

where essential self can be revealed."¹⁷ A little of Philip's "essential self" is uncovered at the end of their holiday on the ranch. He gives Annie, a cowgirl, a painting for a wedding gift and surprisingly enough he displays "a little pride in what he could do" (104). Obviously when away from the strict atmosphere of the town, which is also the symbol of his compromise, Philip feels a little more free. He lets the artist's natural pride in his work and his "hankering for recognition" (104) show. This he never does while in Horizon. The town moreover would be hostile to the avowed purpose of Philip's art. The task of art is to make man's feelings transcend the world in which he lives and by which he is shaped. It is a "rejection of the material common-sense world" (112). The citizens of Horizon are however smug and satisfied with the 'common-sense' world they have created and would not surrender it, nor their earth-bound common-sense for all the world.

The relationship between Philip and the town, is not surprisingly, hostile. Not even his carefully maintained hypocritical pretense of concern for the community's spiritual welfare can hide for very long his actual hatred for it. The best and most poignant example of this is his rather shameless use of the adopted boy, Steve. Because Philip hates the town he teaches the boy to do the same. Mrs. Bentley tells us that he is "doing his utmost to make

¹⁷ Sandra Djwa, "No Other Way," 57.

Steve scorn and reject the town" (75). Philip tries to "shape him" (75) so that he will become like himself, an alienated figure in the prairie community. It is unlikely that the town, despite its disapproval of some of his activities has any deep feelings of hostility towards Philip. The only open clash between him and one of its citizens occurs when Mrs. Finley strikes Steven a second time in defiance of his order not to do so. This episode does not however seem to have precipitated any general antipathy towards the preacher.

While his actual relationship to the town is hostile, his artistic relationship reveals some ambiguity in his feelings towards it. In one of his drawings it is portrayed with a "mean, upstart complacency" (69), "insolent and smug and self-assertive" (69). Mrs. Bentley informs us that in another sketch one feels "no sympathy" (43) for the buildings as they "cower before the flail of dust and sand" (43); instead one waits "in impatience for the wind to work its will" (43). These works plainly reveal Philip's dislike for the town. Nevertheless in the very first drawing that his wife describes one is aware of a certain sympathy for the town which he seems to hate so much. She comments that "[false] fronts ought to be laughed at never understood or pitied" (4). Many of the other sketches are also lacking in any hateful feelings for the town although none display sympathy so openly as the first. More than likely his limited amount of sympathy for the town is borne

of his awareness of the difficult struggle with nature in which it is involved. Philip's art reveals that he is extremely conscious of this conflict. One of his earlier pictures shows a "solitary streetlamp pitted feebly and uselessly against the overshadowing darkness" (17). The lamp, symbol of human habitation and achievement struggles unsuccessfully to illuminate the vastness of the natural night. Further down in the picture is a man hurrying away out of the environment in which he and his creations have no place. Still another picture portrays with "insight and pity" (139) a farmer whose hands show his faith to the earth and seasons that betray them" (139). The last picture reveals that Philip is sympathetic to mankind and not to the harsh environment. He is not a misanthrope as one is at first inclined to believe. He is for humanity, although not in the manner in which it manifests itself in such places as Horizon. Although Philip dislikes the town he seems to associate few positive feelings with the land. This becomes evident when he comes into direct contact with it during his holiday on the farm. He makes several sketches and paintings in his time there. In the first of these Mrs. Bentley notes that "brooding over and pervading everything [is a] conviction of approaching dissolution" (100). The negative tone of this work is so pronounced that merely thinking about it makes her feel "cold" (101). Philip's other works are marked by a similar "strength and fatalism, the same unflinching insight" (102).

Doubtlessly Philip's negative feelings are manifested in the tone of these works but it is also obvious that the land is powerless to inspire him with any hope or positive feelings. The direct contact with it seems to have reinforced the negative cast of his mind.

As a result of his hypocrisy Philip Bentley not only fails to achieve his ambition of becoming a painter, he also fails as a preacher. This is entirely understandable in view of the fact that he is not a believer. To comprehend the nature for his failure as a preacher it is necessary to examine his first theory of art.

"Religion and art," he says, "are almost the same thing anyway. Just different ways of taking a man out of himself, bringing to an emotional pitch that we call ecstasy or rapture. They're both a rejection of the material common-sense world for one that's illusory, yet somehow more important. Now, it's always when a man turns away from this common-sense world around him that he begins to create, when he looks into a void, and has to give it life and form. Steve, you see--if he can lose himself in religion, he can lose himself just as easily in art." (112)

The essence of his idea is that through art and religion man transcends himself. However as a preacher he is entirely incapable of causing people to spiritually transcend themselves and their present situation. At the funeral of Joe Lawson's son he is unable to raise the spirit of the congregation to a new state of consciousness. They remain sunk in defeatist frame of mind, a fact shown by Lawson's remark that perhaps death has been kind to the boy since in life he will not be "missing such a lot" (109). Mrs. Bentley remarks that she wishes "Philip could preach a

sermon with more comfort and conviction in it" (108). However as an artist, he occasionally approaches the fulfillment of his criteria. The picture of the defiant little schoolhouse makes her want to "think poetry and strive to utter elogence" (80). The portrait of Joe Lawson inspires in her the urge "to do something strong and steadfast" (139).

Aware of her husband's artistic abilities, Mrs. Bentley encourages him to develop them. For example she buys him paints. His gratitude is, for such a reserved man, painfully obvious. He lets her "snuggle close to him" (90), he apologizes to her for his unfriendly behavior, and in his touch she feels "the hint of promise" (90). She also feels he should leave the profession and the environment into which it forces him before his talents and feelings are entirely stifled. She believes that if he is able to draw so powerfully "when he's all shrivelled up inside with guilt of his hypocrisy" (139), then he should be able to do even better "when he's free of it, able to respect himself again" (139). She also feels obligated to help him because she blames herself for keeping him in the church by requiring him to support her. She plans to help Philip and herself escape the little towns in which they have been confined for so long by saving a thousand dollars and going to the city where they will start a "book and music shop" (106). At first she keeps this scheme a secret but when he asks her what she intends to do with a certain cheque,

she tells him. He is obviously skeptical. His plan for achieving his independence involves the attainment of "another church and a bigger salary" (115); this would in effect only sink him even more deeply into the hypocrisy which is destroying him.

Despite Mrs. Bentley's efforts Philip really does little to help himself. He refuses to collect past wages, or to seriously consider her proposal. This may arouse the suspicion that he is afraid to test his talent in the world. However this is unlikely since Philip knows from Paul's reaction to his work, and the opinion of his wife and Annie that he is a fairly good artist. He does not help himself because he is bitterly, reluctantly resigned to his fate. His wife knows this: he's "been hungry so long that food no longer tempts him" (136).

The lack of communication and co-operation between them on the matter of getting out of the church is symptomatic of the poor condition of their marriage. They barely communicate with each other: "We never ask each other questions" (73). Philip is in the habit of shutting himself into his study which he knows his wife is loathe to enter. Thus he avoids unnecessary contact with her. Often the talk between them is tinged by hostility and resentment. Mrs. Bentley notes that even the silences between them are "strained" (14). Furthermore Philip seems to resent her pride in his work which she shows off to various women in the town. He cannot understand her desire to be proud of

the man she still essentially loves. There seems to be little, if any, sexual passion between them, and often when one comes to bed, the other pretends to be asleep. There is a hint that the lack of sexual love may be adversely affecting his art. This can be deduced from the fact that after he makes love with Judith he creates one of his rare vital, lively paintings, "a string of galloping broncos done with such a light, deft touch that [one] can feel space and air and freedom" (128). The lack of sexual passion, that is, vitality may also be seen in the somber, grim tone of his drawings; they seem to reflect, among other things, sexual repression. Further evidence of the poor condition of their marriage is the struggle that seems to be going on between them. This conflict revolves around Philip's desire to be self-sufficient and Mrs. Bentley's desire to draw nearer to him, to possess him. The source of Philip's desire for self-sufficiency is his father, who, according to Mrs. Bentley's description, was a self-sufficient" (30) man. Philip "made a hero of his father" (30) and consequently feels compelled to exist without needing others. However, upon meeting the future Mrs. Bentley he discovers that he needs others to some extent. Since this need is contradictory to his ideal, "the impulse to seek [Mrs. Bentley] out made him feel guilty, as if he were false to himself" (33). When they are married she is a daily reminder that he has compromised his ideal. This is not a good feeling with which to enter marriage. In the face of his own need, the

existence of which is shown by the fact of his marriage, and her desire to be closer to him, he attempts to remain aloof.¹⁸ These contradictory motives cause severe tension between them.

Tension is also caused by the fact that Mrs. Bentley feels hurt because the necessity of supporting her keeps him in the church. However her feelings are based more on his looks than on anything he has said. She too may be harboring resentment against him. It must not be forgotten that she gave up her career as a pianist for him; she says "I had ambition once too--and it was to be something more than the wife of a half-starved country preacher" (27). The bitterness is readily apparent in this statement. That her ambition is yet alive may be seen in the fact that she plays the piano whenever she can, often to his displeasure. The fact that he dislikes music is still another source of friction between them. The gloomy state of their marriage is also, obviously, reflected in the dark, somber drawings he produces.

While Philip's relationship to his wife is poor, his relationship to Steven is, at least temporarily, good. Mrs. Bentley is aware of the tenuous nature of their friendship. His care for the boy is based not only on pity but also on the fact that Steven provides him a "chance to

¹⁸On this issue the following entry in her diary is illuminating: "He would just half-yield himself to me, then stand detached, self-sufficient" (33).

dream" (53) to momentarily escape from the strictures of a reality which he finds unpleasant. Moreover, she informs the reader that he does not really see the boy "with his eyes" (53), but only with his "pity and imagination (53). She believes that "[after] a while the pity and imagination are going to run out" (53) and that Philip will be disappointed when he sees "an ordinary uninspiring boy" (53). Similar things have apparently happened in the past; she tells us that he "was forever being disillusioned, forever finding people out" (32). As with Neil Fraser the imagination is allowed to interfere with his assessment of others, thus condemning him to constant disappointment. This fact may partly serve to explain his withdrawn nature.

As a result of their poor marital relationship Mrs. Bentley strikes up a friendship with Paul, who displays traces of sexual interest in her by expounding on the origins of several erotic words. She however is mainly interested in her husband; at a dance she wishes that Philip and not Paul were her partner.¹⁹ There is, contrary to the opinion of some critics, no substantial evidence that their friendship includes sex. While Mrs. Bentley spends some time with Paul, her husband becomes involved with Judith West, a farm girl who sings in the church choir. He and Judith make love one night, unaware that Mrs. Bentley can hear

¹⁹In her diary she writes that while dancing she "kept wishing it were Philip instead of Paul" (97).

them; she says nothing. When it becomes known that Judith is pregnant she has little difficulty in persuading Philip to adopt the child. The child becomes the basis of her effort to free Philip from the ministry and both of them from the prospect of "another Horizon every three or four years" (156). Philip, because of his own experience is bitterly aware of the stigma of illegitimacy in a small town and is easily convinced that they should leave it. He also expresses, for the first time, a genuine interest in the bookstore for which she has been saving; he even makes inquiries about a store that they used to know. They finally decide that he will leave the ministry. This allows Philip to assume his identity as an artist thereby giving him an opportunity to become a success in creative endeavors; by making an end of the energy-sapping hypocrisy, the decision also gives his art a chance to regain some of its former vitality. Moreover in a new environment both of them will have an opportunity to grow spiritually.

The crisis in their personal relationship comes when Philip sees his wife and Paul leaving the bedroom where they had been looking at the baby. Provoked by his accusations, she tells him that she knows him to be the father of the child. She runs out into the prairie, and upon her return, instead of rejecting her, Philip takes her hand. This is a significant gesture because it shows not only that he has some vestige of feeling for her but also that he needs and wants her. This tacit admission

is a sign that he is no longer attempting to maintain an image, that he is starting to be himself, to admit his need for her, and to allow her a part in his existence. With this change in him their marriage may be saved. Furthermore the baby will doubtlessly satisfy, at least to some extent, Mrs. Bentley's desire to possess someone, thus diverting the pressure of this need away from Philip. The novel ends on a positive note since Philip has a chance to become a painter and their marriage will probably be saved.

It has already been noted that as a result of his compromise Philip Bentley fails to become an artist as he had planned. He simply does not attain his ambitions. As an artist Bentley must be seen as a part of the tower tradition. His beliefs about art supply evidence on this issue. He maintains that its purpose is to penetrate the deceptive surface of the world, to reject the "material common-sense world" (112) and to reveal an "illusory" (112) but more important realm. Moreover, art should take people out of themselves, make them transcend the limitations of their normal emotional states. According to his other theory he would like to remove "sentiment" (156) that is, human content from art. Similar misanthropic feelings are often displayed by artists in the tower tradition. Like such artists he also shows impatience with his human limitations and needs, as seen in his desire for self-sufficiency. His entire existence is proof that he is an observer rather than a participator.

Although his use of Steve as an excuse to dream, to escape reality is a negative use of the imagination, Bentley's art shows no really negative employment of this faculty. Art is for him a means of recording his observations and of expressing himself. His use of the word "rejection" (112) in one of his theories should not deceive one into believing this is a negative use of the faculty. He rejects the surface of reality to reveal something beneath it and not to create an imaginative world that is simply contrary to reality. He wants, in other words, to discover the world's better side.

Having ended its examination of the three major artist-novels written between 1940 and 1960, this paper will now briefly focus upon two other novels published during these years. Neither of them in their entirety makes an outstanding contribution to Canadian artist-fiction. However, they deserve some mention because they contain artist-heroes who differ from those encountered in previous novels on account of the fact that their artistic endeavors are motivated largely by the belief that by means of art they must serve others.²⁰ The first of these two novels is Hugh MacLennan's Two Solitudes (1944) the hero of which is Paul

²⁰ During his experience on the mountain David Canaan also vows to serve the valley people by means of art. However, even in his trance it is not the foremost thought in his mind. With the protagonists of Two Solitudes and Yellow Boots, the idea of serving others is the reason for the very existence of their art. This cannot be said of David Cannan, whose art is primarily a way of coming into closer contact with the world.

Tallard, a young writer who has dedicated his talents to forging a new vision of Canadian society. He believes that he must penetrate the surface of Canadian society and explore its unknown facets. His task as an artist will be to discover and reveal the 'real' Canada, "a country that no one [knows]."²¹ His main interest is in the problem of this society's apparent division into two hostile races, a matter with which he has first hand experience. He knows from his own life and his observations that the French and English can get along with each other at a personal level. These facts in themselves are formless--"[life] by itself is formless wherever it is" (342)--and must be shaped or formed by the imagination into a vision of a society unified despite its differences. While writing he finds that is "at last beating out a harmony" (352), that is, a coherent form or vision of disparate facts. Although the word 'vision' is not explicitly used by MacLennan, that is precisely what Paul is attempting to create by universalizing particular experiences and observations. He is one of the few protagonists in Canadian artist-fiction to become a social visionary, whose work is imbued with a sense of the possibilities inherent in Canadian society. Robert Fulton of Our Little Life it will be recalled merely analyses Canadian society, but fails to develop a particular vision of a unified

²¹Huge MacLennan, Two Solitudes, (Toronto: Popular Library, n.d.), p. 341. All quotations in the section dealing with Two Solitudes are from this book unless other indications are given.

Canadian society, which is what Tallard attempts to do. In this sense Tallard is a unique figure in the history of artist-fiction in Canada.

The second of these two artist-hero novels is Vera Lysenko's Yellow Boots (1954), a work which critics have almost entirely ignored. In the Literary History of Canada it is not mentioned at all, and Desmond Pacey's Creative Writing in Canada contains only a passing reference to the effect that it belongs to the regional idylls "improved"²² (253) by a "more accurate reflection of the actual conditions of the life of its region"²³ (253). Nevertheless, in the history of Canadian artist-fiction the novel is noteworthy for its portrayal of a "folk artist,"²⁴ one who is dedicated to serving the common people. Lilli Landash brings them the beauty and solace of her music. For them she sings the folk songs that express their feelings about the experiences they have undergone during many centuries in various lands. She is interested in preserving their traditional music, and in this capacity, the artist becomes the bridge to the past which might otherwise be forgotten. Lilli is especially intent on preserving in song the best aspects of the traditions of her own people, the

²² Desmond Pacey, Creative Writing in Canada, 2nd edition (Toronto: The Ryerson Press, 1967), p. 253.

²³ Ibid.

²⁴ Vera Lysenko, Yellow Boots (Toronto: The Ryerson Press, 1954), p. 263.

Boukovinians. Although she sings mostly traditional folk songs, she also creates tunes from the rhythms and life of the modern factory. Thus her art also embraces the modern existence of the common people. Her use of factory life as material for art is another factor that makes her a unique figure among Canadian artist-heroes.

These years between 1940 and 1960 also saw the publication of numerous satires directed at various aspects of the Canadian 'cultural scene.' Foremost among these are the novels of Robertson Davies, who, according to Hugo McPherson introduces (along with Sinclair Ross) "a theme new to Canadian fiction . . . the absorbing problem of the imagination, of the artist."²⁵ While Davies' novels undoubtedly concern themselves with artists, they are not even among the first in Canadian fiction to do so, a fact amply proven by the previous chapter.

Davies' earliest novel, Tempest Tost (1951) portrays the difficulties encountered by true artists in the supposedly cultural community of Salterton. It concerns a production of Shakespeare's "The Tempest" in which the cast is made up of "the best equivalents to Shakespeare's characters that Salterton can offer."²⁶ They are sorry equivalents indeed. With the exception of the director, Valentine Rich,

²⁵Carl F. Klinck, ed., Literary History of Canada p. 704.

²⁶Ibid.

the only real artist is Humphrey Cobbler a musician despised by the cultural elite for his easy-going approach to life. The production of the play is marred by the conflict between the true artists, intent on capturing the spirit of the original work and narrow-minded citizens of Salterton who would make the play an excuse to show off their education. While artists usually gain the upper hand they are all too often forced to compromise with the forces of convention.

The plot of Davies' second novel, Leaven of Malice (1954) revolves around the animosities released in Salterton by a false announcement of engagement between Solly Bridgewater and Pearl Vambrace. They are members of two of this community's finest families. The incident ends with their marriage. At the conclusion of the story Solly, a potential artist, announces his intention to create Canadian literature instead of studying what is already there.

Davies' last novel, A Mixture of Frailties (1958) deals with the career of Monica Gall, who advances from her position as a singer with Salterton's Hope and Heart Gospel Quartet to a leading singer in a widely acclaimed new opera. The change is made possible by an award which enables her to study music in England. McPherson believes that in Monica Gall Salterton "has at last found its voice,"²⁷ a dangerous view, since soon after giving a concert in Canada

²⁷Ibid., p. 705.

she returns to England. If she is indeed a symbol of "the Canadian imagination,"²⁸ then Davies is in effect saying that in light of better opportunities elsewhere the imagination will not reside permanently in Canada.

Two other satirical novels directed at the Canadian 'art world' are Paul Hiebert's Sarah Binks (1947) and John Cornish's The Provincials (1951).²⁹ The latter, readable but not brilliant, satirizes the artistic pretensions of Vancouver's upper classes. Hiebert's novel is easily the more memorable of the two. It presents a number of critical essays on the life and work of Sarah Binks, "Sweet Songstress of Saskatchewan."³⁰ The essays satirize the poetess who tried to base her art on farm experiences as well as the critics who evaluate her 'achievement.' The critics who see profundity in her blunders and endless significance in every detail of her narrow existence are shown to be pedantic fools.

Of the two periods in the history of Canadian artist-fiction that have been discussed so far, the period 1940 to 1960 is the more significant. This claim rests largely on the fact that Ross's As For Me and My House and

²⁸George Woodcock, ed., A Choice of Critics (Toronto: Oxford University Press, 1966), p. 247.

²⁹John Cornish has also written another artist-novel Sherbourne Street, published in 1968.

³⁰Paul Hiebert, Sarah Binks (Toronto: McClelland and Stewart, 1967), p. 25.

Buckler's The Mountain and Valley were published during this time. With the exception of Grove's The Yoke of Life, no work on the fifty years before 1940 matches the depth and complexity of character portrayal displayed in these novels. Moreover, if one accepts the general consensus that Buckler's and Ross's novels are unusually well and effectively written, it may be claimed that except for Grove's work, no earlier artist-novels present the struggles of the artist in such an interesting manner. The significance of this period of Canadian artist-fiction is also enhanced by the works of Edward McCourt. In him Canada has found an author who displays a consistent and serious interest in artists and those with artistic temperaments. The previous fifty years lack an author of this kind.

In reviewing the artist-heroes appearing in the fiction produced between 1940 and 1960 one notes that like their predecessors from the twenties and thirties they feel the urge to leave the land for more congenial surroundings. They feel that life on the land is not suited to the pursuit of artistic ambitions. David Canaan, Neil Fraser and Lilli Landash strive to leave the land, although only Lilli succeeds in doing so. The fact that she becomes a successful artist corroborates the finding made in the last chapter that potential creators who leave the land achieve their aims more often than those who do not. An increasing number of artist-heroes appearing in this period are not required to serve the land and therefore do not have to

struggle against it. Paul Tallard and Philip Bentley spring to mind on this point. However, Bentley discovers that even the kind of society produced by the land can hinder the development of creative abilities and that the artist is better to leave it behind.

In regard to the question of tendencies towards the tower or fount, the most significant event in this era of artist-fiction is the appearance of a character who might have, had he lived, unified both traditions. David Canaan feels certain characteristics of the fount and the tower so strongly that he would have been compelled to reconcile them. The other artist-heroes, like those of the previous period, are evenly divided between the tower and the fount. Bentley and Fraser tend to the former, while Tallard and Landash are attracted to the latter. There is a tendency in the fiction of the period between 1940 and 1960 to portray the artist as a failure. No trend in either direction is noted in the fiction of the foregoing two decades. It is also observed that in the fiction of both periods the artists attracted to the fount succeed more often than those drawn to the tower. Artists appearing in both eras usually have difficulty in establishing adequate personal relationships. Such problems are especially prevalent among those associated with the tower. This is only to be expected since they prefer to observe the world. Most of the artists found in the fiction written between 1940 and 1960 have a relatively positive attitude towards modern society

and the city which usually symbolizes it. David Cannan, Philip Bentley and Lilli Landash are attracted to the city where they feel life is more exciting than on the land. Paul Tallard sees the evils of modern society but does not appear to reject it. Neil Fraser is plainly a victim of modern society. However he does not reject it; to the contrary, he is glad to participate in its upheavals.

On the whole, the artists of the forties and fifties use the imagination in a positive manner, a change from the previous era where no trend was noted on this issue. There seems however to be no correlation between a positive use of the imagination and the success of the artist. Canaan and Bentley, failures, use the imagination positively, while Landash and Tallard, successes, do the same.

Whether or not the tendencies found in the artist-fiction of these years will also be found in that of the sixties will be revealed in the next chapter.

CHAPTER III

THE ARTIST-HERO FROM 1960 TO 1970

The decade following 1960 appears to register no sign of a diminishing interest in the genre of artist-fiction. At least nine such novels were published in Canada during this time. They are: Leonard Cohen's The Favorite Game (1963); Mordecai Richler's The Incomparable Atuk (1963); Hugh Hood's White Figure, White Ground (1964), The Camera Always Lies (1967), and A Game of Touch (1970); John Cornish's Sherbourne Street (1968); Robert Hunter's Erebus (1968); James Bacque's The Lonely Ones (1968);¹ and Sinclair Ross's A Whir of Gold (1970). The best of these works are undoubtedly White Figure, White Ground, The Lonely Ones and The Favorite Game. The protagonists of these novels are unequivocally artists and not merely persons with artistic temperaments. Their creativity is always at or near the center of the novel's concern. This cannot be said with such certainty of The Camera Always Lies, A Game of Touch, A Whir of Gold and Erebus. The artistic nature of the heroes of these works is not at all strongly emphasized and is not always near the focal point of the author's vision. The development of adequate personal relationships is the

¹The Lonely Ones has been republished as Big Lonely.

central concern of these novels. Since works in which creativity is the main interest are available the importance of these novels as examples of artist-fiction is diminished.

Few of the artist-heroes appearing in the novels published after 1960 are dependent upon the land. Since the need to fulfill its demands no longer hinders them in their efforts to create, the theme of the artist's struggle with the land is largely eliminated from the fiction of the sixties. A result of the artist's freedom from the land is that its role in his existence changes; it ceases to be an 'enemy' that must be conquered. Such a radical alteration in the artist's relationship to the land requires the introduction of a new term. To refer to the land under the changed conditions the terms 'nature' and 'natural world' will be used.² Because nature does not adversely affect the pursuit of his ambitions a positive relationship may develop between it and the artist. The protagonists appearing in White Figure, White Ground, The Lonely Ones and The Favorite Game, as well as hero of Erebus take the opportunity to establish a positive relationship with nature. Each of them approaches nature in his own way; some go directly to nature to paint, others stay in the city and develop a

²The Introduction to this paper also explains this change in terminology necessitated by the artist's new relationship with nature.

positive attitude towards it.³ None sees in nature an enemy of art.

Of the three major artist-heroes to be discussed in this chapter, Alex MacDonald, the main character of White Figure, White Ground has the most ambivalent relationship with nature. Strong positive and negative elements are present in his attitude towards it. However the negative feelings are not caused by a belief that nature adversely influences his art. As a matter of fact, Alex returns to nature, in his case the seaside at Barrington Nova Scotia, not only to gather information about his father's past but also to paint the various shades of light to be found in the sky. The works he creates at Barrington are therefore at least partially inspired by his encounters with the natural world. The first painting is based on two moments of contact with it. In one instance he observes, while lying on the beach, that the sky has various shades of white; in the other he is subject to a vivid frightening experience of man's small and insignificant position in the cosmos. The latter experience, origin of his negative attitude towards nature, is by far the more powerful of the two encounters, leaving him with feelings of "fear,

³The demand that the approach to nature take the form of a direct journey to it would unduly limit the area of discussion. A positive attitude to nature is also an 'approach' insofar as it shows the artist's willingness to accept nature.

desolation, insignificance"⁴ as his "infinitesimal" (84) self clings "to a tiny ball spinning in an immensity" (84). Man, and all of his creations and values, are obviously not important in the universe. His strongly negative experience convinces Alex that he must never go to the beach alone again.

In the first painting "Light Source #1" he reproduces the degrees of whiteness that he has seen in the sky; the work consists of "plane after plane of the modulation of light" (239). It should be noted however that there are important differences between Alex's creation and the original, largely negative encounter with nature. Because Alex has in some way transformed the original vision his painting fails to reflect its negative elements. The differences between his creation and experience may at least be partially accounted for by his belief that art asserts human values. Man and his values are essential to art although to the universe, to the natural world, they are insignificant. Art and nature are therefore in some respects opposed to each other.

There will be no painting without human values in the picture. Inhuman painting cannot exist; you can banish the figure, the representation as much as you wish, but you can't get rid of the painter and still have paintings. (35)

⁴Hugh Hood, White Figure, White Ground (Toronto: The Ryerson Press, 1964), p. 84. All quotations in the section dealing with White Figure, White Ground are from this novel unless other indications are given.

While "Light Source #1" causes in viewers the sensation of looking at immense spaces it also has a religious aura about it: "it [is] mysterious in the religious sense" (239). Religion, the essence of which is the belief in "human values" (35) is one of the means by which man gives his life significance. Thus in his painting Alex displays the importance of man and his values. His vision has not been determined by the mere fact of man's insignificance but has overcome it by creating a work that, although based on nature, still includes "human values" (35). The belief in these values is manifested in the white colors in "Light Source #1." In this painting Alex has shown man's superiority over nature in another way. In comparison to the painting "the real light from the windows and doors looked pale, tawdry, unnatural, secondhand" (239). "At its edges shopworn secondhand nature stopped and art began" (239). His art, as can be seen, represents a twofold victory over nature on behalf of mankind.

For the sake of clear explication the foregoing paragraphs have emphasized the negative aspects of Alex MacDonald's relationship to the universe, or, natural world. However it cannot be ignored that the relationship has positive sides to it although none of these are portrayed as vigorously as the negative ones. Nature, which frightened Alex, is also able to inspire him, indicating that he sees something positive in it; no artist is inspired by something to which he reacts in a wholly

negative manner. Moreover he speaks several times of the "white, beneficent sea" (153) which is the source of all life on earth. Although nature does not accord man a significant place in the cosmos it is responsible for his existence in it. Alex, apparently grateful to nature for life, as well as for inspiration, displays his positive feelings towards it in the white coloring of "Light Source #1."

However the white color of "Light Source #1" manifests more than his belief in "human values" (35) and his positive feelings about nature. It also shows the positive elements of his relationships with others, particularly with his father and his wife. If the intense love scenes between Alex and Madeleine mean anything, they enjoy a highly satisfactory marital life. Up to the time of the journey to Barrington they do not seem to have been plagued by any insurmountable difficulties. While Alex is fashioning a good career for himself in the art world his wife seems happy to be of service in advancing his fortunes. She apparently does a lot of negotiating on his behalf with art dealers thus leaving his mind almost totally free for painting. Insofar as she facilitates his career as a painter and keeps him happy sexually, Madeleine is a 'light source.' However it should be noted that despite their close relationship Alex and Madeleine are not wholly fused. She understands that his inner life from which his paintings arise can never be accessible to

her; at the level of his talents they are "on parallel tracks, close but never intersecting" (233).

The connection between "Light Source #1" and his father is even more obvious than the one between the painting and his wife. There is a clear parallel between his artistic quest in Barringtonford and his personal quest there. As an artist he wants to find the light source, the "final shade of white . . . the ultimate ground" (84) of all color. As a man he wants to find out about his father, his life source, the "ultimate ground" (84) of his personal existence. His explanation for the latter search is that at his age "a man begins to take some interest in his origins" (43). A subsidiary motive is his desire to find out why his father was so failure prone throughout his life, why this man who worked so persistently never really achieved any of his ambitions. He believes that the answer is to be found in Barringtonford where his father grew up and acquired "the seeds of his death" (100), that is, the habits and experiences that caused him "to wear out in just the way he [did]" (100). His aunts he feels may be able to help him find the answers he wants.

"Light Source #1" manifests the positive aspects of his relationship to his father who gave him life. This person's gifts to him, love, and assistance, have helped to illuminate Alex's existence and to lay the basis for his success as a painter. Thus his life source has also been the source of spiritual light. Ellen immediately recognizes

that Alex's father is implicitly present in the painting. He is there as a result of the influence he has had on Alex. Thus the painting shows not only the physical light source but the spiritual light source as well.

As with any good work of art the picture transcends the personal meaning it has for the artist. It is also a statement about the nature of personal relationships between all people.

A whole series of overlays, one consistency after another, with a different quality of light every time . . . If any light falls it'll be moved around a lot and refracted through all those different consistencies (143)

Each person is an 'overlay' of paint, passing on life and spiritual light in his own unique way.

Alex paints a companion piece for "Light Source #1" entitled "Light Source #2." It is an extremely black painting containing only touches of green and vermillion. The black is obviously representative of all that is negative in the universe, be it located inside or outside of man. The painting manifests, in the first place, the negative aspects of his relationship to the cosmos, the fear and outright terror that he feels on the beach. It also displays the negative elements in his relationships with others.

The novel does not reveal any noteworthy negative elements that may exist in Alex's marriage before the trip to Barrington. It is however marred during his stay in that small community by his skirmish with adultery. The origin of this incident lies in Madeleine's perhaps

misguided belief that she is hindering the continued development of his art. She tells Alex's dealer that because he has been "painting images of [her] for five or six years" (91) he is "stuck with red and blue and yellow" (91). If a brief digression may be permitted, it should be remarked that this conversation not only reveals her loyalty to Alex but something about the nature of his creativity as well: it is in some way connected with the women who are present. Alex corroborates this when he tells Madeleine that the picture made during the summer would have been different had she been with him. The relationship between women and his creativity is unfortunately not developed by Hood. Madeleine decides that during her absence Alex should have the company of Ellen, his first cousin; she encourages the girl to stay with him. Almost inevitably this leads to a growth of affection between Ellen and Alex. At first he only wants her with him at the beach which he is afraid to visit alone. As the summer passes they are gradually drawn closer to each other; the situation between them becomes increasingly erotic. It almost seems that at one point Ellen dares Alex to see her naked. They finally kiss. Alex, very bitter with himself feels extremely guilty about his conduct. His excessive guilt about a kiss indicates his awareness of the fact that their tenuous relationship could easily become a full-blown love affair and that together they could start a new life. If Madeleine is to be believed Ellen exerts a positive influence on his art. When Alex confesses the

kiss to her, she realizes that she is no longer "essential to . . . [his] well-being" (233) and tells him to choose between herself and the girl. The realistic Alex takes his wife. Although this incident ends on a positive note the guilt feelings which plague Alex find their way into the black coloring of "Light Source #2."

More durable than the guilt of his brief excursion into extra-marital sex is the guilt he feels as a result of the shabby treatment he accorded his father. As a young man he displayed no gratitude to this person for financing his years in art-school. He used him shamelessly as a mere source of money. Although he narrates the story of his behavior to Ellen he provides no reasons for it. The guilt incurred by these actions which he cannot forget or forgive himself is also manifested in the darkness of his second painting.

Despite the predominance of dark colors "Light Source #2", is not a totally pessimistic painting. Alex as a matter of fact finds its tone a "genuinely comic" (228), that is optimistic. This tone is caused by the vermillion and the green. The latter is, according to Alex "the color of man in the world God gave him," (39) and is associated with human creative activities such as "planting trees" (39). Not only do these colors impart a comic tone to the work but they also give "meaning" (228) to the dominant darker shades; the green and vermillion "[yank] it [the black] into meaning" (228). Moreover the

vermillion adds heat and movement, things associated with life, to the "cold grays and blacks" (228). Since the tone of the painting is established by the lighter colors MacDonald is obviously saying that man and life triumph over the universe in which they originally have no important place. Man is the creature that gives meaning to the black. The painting also says, at the personal level, that Alex has overcome the guilt and hatred that have marred his existence. It displays his belief that the positive characteristics in him are able to defeat the negative ones. On a more general level the painting manifests his faith in the superiority of the positive forces of life over those forces that would see man succumb to pessimism, defeat, and guilt.

Instead of preparing the second painting for exhibition along with the first Alex sends it, much to the astonishment of his wife and art dealer, to his cousin Ellen in Nova Scotia. By doing this he is not only repaying her for the assistance she gave him during the summer but is also saying in a symbolic manner that the guilt they have incurred during the summer can be overcome by life itself, by change and growth. The picture is furthermore of special import to his aunts. During his visit he learns that they are at least in part responsible for the "seeds of death" (100) that flawed his father's existence. They condemned him for marrying his first cousin and generally helped to make him feel unwanted. They approved his banishment from his house. "Light Source #2," which embodies all that is

negative in human affairs, his own guilt, as well as their petty hatred, shows the triumph over these things. His aunts, blinded by the long-standing family quarrel, do not see the green in the picture; they are unable to transcend the darkness that is in them. Ellen however immediately sees the "comical hints of green" (250) showing thereby that she has understood the full meaning of Alex's message.⁵

Alex MacDonald is one of the few artist-heroes encountered in the study who feels almost totally comfortable in the modern world. The other artist who shares his affection for modern society is Richard Milne, the protagonist of Knister's White Narcissus. With little or no questioning Alex accepts most of the standards and institutions existing in modern society. He is not in the least troubled by the commercialization of his work and is as a matter of fact grateful for the rewards bestowed upon him by the establishment. When informed of the fact that he is to be the subject of a television special he feels proud that at the age of thirty-nine he is "going to be institutionalized, sanctified, given the full treatment" (214). He accepts these rewards because they satisfy his need "to sleep in a

⁵It might be said that in giving the painting away Alex is somehow putting the darkness of his life behind him. He simply wants nothing more to do with it. If this is indeed the case, Alex has certainly found an easy way of getting the evil out of his life. However, it is unlikely that Alex is merely sending the darkness in his life away. He has already defeated it during the difficult struggle to paint "Light Source #2."

warm bed, eat well and live comfortably" (203) and because they allow him the freedom to paint. The only ideological consideration that he voices is his dislike for the military; he claims to be a pacifist. Alex does not believe that his art brings advantage only to himself but maintains that it is making a contribution to the spiritual evolution of mankind. He explains to his dealer that future beings from a superior civilization will regard his work as "formally perfect" (222) but not exactly 'civilized.' He will be in the position that cave painters are in at the present. His relationship to the city is quite satisfactory. Although he is not blind to some of its disadvantages and inhuman aspects he also knows that he belongs there and not in a small town.⁶

Alex MacDonald is a very successful artist and almost easily achieves the ambitions that he has set out for himself. He is, on the whole, an artist belonging to the fount tradition. Rather than resenting his sexual needs he appears to enjoy them. He shows no yearning for "release from human bondage,"⁷ that is, from the various conditions

⁶During his visit to Barrington he had considered buying his father's house from the two aunts, and living there most of the year. However his own realization that the city is his home, as well as a little conniving between Madeleine and Ellen, who is due to inherit the house, prevents this plan from ever being fulfilled. He explains why he can not return to Barrington in a long speech to his dealer. See p. 222.

⁷Maurice Beebe, Ivory Towers and Sacred Founts, p. 114.

of man's existence whatever they are. Far from wanting to detach himself from the world and society he is glad to participate in its affairs. He is extremely happy and proud of the success and fame that he has achieved for himself.⁸ He is also convinced that his art is making a genuine contribution to mankind. Moreover he gives no indication that he believes that art takes precedence over any other aspect of his existence. This is shown by his unwillingness to sacrifice his life with Madeleine merely for the chance of creating new and perhaps better works in the company of Ellen.

Harry Summers, the artist-hero of James Bacques' The Lonely Ones is like Alex MacDonald, independent of the land and are therefore not required to fulfill any of its demands. However, insofar as he spends a great deal of time in the wilderness Summers is involved in a closer relationship with nature than is Alex MacDonald. His relationship with nature is also more positive than MacDonald's since he is not subject to any negative experiences with it. This may of course be due to the fact that he never considers man's position in the vast cosmos. He views nature only in its most immediate manifestations and never as a whole. Summers' affection for the wilderness can be seen in the

⁸ Madeleine believes that he is a man "who just didn't care" (96) but she obviously does not know him very well on this matter.

fact that immediately upon his return to Canada from England he goes out to a lake where he and his friend André have built a cabin.

Despite his rather positive relationship with the natural world it does not seem to have inspired any of his art. Only his friend André produces a painting which involves nature; whether or not his other works do so is not said. Although Harry's and André's relationship with nature does not result in any great amount of art it does result in their rebirth as artists. In this novel nature functions not as a source of artistic inspiration but as a refuge where the heroes are able to assume their identities as artists once more. During their disastrous excursion into separatist politics they had virutally abandoned their role as artists. When the plot to which they devote most of their time fails they decide to go to a cabin "up north"⁹ (183) where they can collect their thoughts and begin to be artists again. The protection from the law afforded them by nature will provide the peace needed for a rebirth. In this sense nature functions as a womb which not only protects but also allows spiritual transformations to take place. Thus nature, previously opposed to almost all spiritual endeavors and developments, becomes a friend of the human spirit. More

⁹James Bacque, The Lonely Ones (Toronto: McClelland and Stewart, 1969), p. 183. All quotations in the section dealing with The Lonely Ones are from this novel unless other indications are given.

specifically, it becomes an ally of the artist.¹⁰

In sharp contrast to Alex MacDonald who is well-adjusted to modern society, Harry Summers, the narrator of The Lonely Ones, is in his own words a "misfit" (126). Both he and his friend André, a French-Canadian painter, are severely alienated from the modern world. He is opposed to its aggressive nature which refuses to recognize the legitimacy of the existence of those who are different, "the French, the poor, the artist, [and] all the rotten minorities that disturb the system" (59). He is especially incensed by the way in which French-Canadians have been treated in Canada. This is one motive for his participation in the separatist cause. He is also particularly anti-American, apparently convinced that the unpleasant aspects of Canadian society have originated in the United States. The "[commercialism], indifference to life, the cozy attitudes, safeness, dullness" (20) of Canadian society antagonize him as well. These things are in his view the "ruin of [artistic] inspiration" (20).¹¹ He admits quite freely that he is afraid of this society and that at the prospect of ever having to become a part of it he feels "[running]

¹⁰It should be noted that for most of the novel, nature functions as a different kind of refuge. It is also a place where André and his separatist friends can hide from the police. This function of nature has no bearing on this study.

¹¹His feelings on this matter are similar to those of Robert Fulton of Our Little Life.

away fear" (20). Evidence of his fear can be seen in his flight to England from Canada where he felt that the social pressures to conform were too much for him. Later he flees England and his fiancée as a result of her parent's attempt to assimilate him into the modern world.

One of the problems that occupies both Harry and André is the question of how to change the society in which they no longer believe. Both of them feel the need to do something. Harry tells his friend that "to see what is going on here and, not to react, not want to act, and take part, is impossible" (122). He indicates that both of them have already tried to use art as a means of combatting the vulgarity of North American society: "[We] have both been fighting with our pitiful brushes" (58). They have tried to use art, or in broader terms, the imagination, as an instrument of social change. By implication therefore they, and any artists like them have become enemies of the state. In this sense they resemble Paul Minas, the protagonist of Solo, who attempts to employ music as a means of counter-acting nationalism. During one of their conversations André explains to Harry his theory of the artist's role in the modern world. He believes that "the artist [owes] a debt to society which he almost invariably [has] to play out as a revolutionary" (40) and that art is only "a different means of carrying on the struggle" (40). Their belief in the artist's duty to involve himself in the life of the world indicates that they belong to the fount tradition.

They do not want the creator to be isolated from the rest of mankind.

André however reaches a more extreme position in his political views than does Harry. He is not content merely to nurse vague hatreds, feelings of alienation and desires to ameliorate the lot of mankind. He provides a definite ideological direction for his beliefs by joining a separatist group working to remove Quebec from the influence of the commercialized English-Canadian society he hates. Janine, André's mistress, tells Harry that he has now become "one part Picisso, one part Jesus, and one part Che Guevara" (39). This is a rather perceptive comment on her part since these three people indicate the choices that are open to these two men. They must choose between the artist as revolutionary, the savior as revolutionary and the soldier as revolutionary. André tries to combine all three but Janine knows this cannot be done effectively. She tells Harry that since he has joined the separatists André "has not painted anything" (45). This is not exactly true for André is at work on one painting but it does point out that art has begun to occupy a secondary position in his life. His membership in a separatist unit shows that he has chosen to take the part of the revolutionary as soldier and consequently he has little time for any creative activities. He believes that the situation in Quebec is so desperate that he must "abandon the pleasures of art for a while" (40). In other words, André has denied the primacy of his identity as a

artist, as well as any faith in the power of art to influence society.

As a result of André's separatist beliefs the relationship between the two men is strained. He tells his English-Canadian friend that he has returned to Quebec to "kick out the Anglos" (38), Harry included. The latter realizes that their relationship is gradually deteriorating, that André's "friendship no longer reaches out to [him]" (87) and that they are held together only by something or someone else, such as "the escape cabin, painting" (87) or Janine. He sees an almost unbridgeable "gap" (123) between them. At one time he tries to prove that friendship means more to André than politics by pointing a rifle at one of separatists. When the French-Canadian does not react Harry tells him that he "instinctively [trusts] friendship more than the revolution" (40). André however is reluctant to admit that Harry may be right.

The increasingly cool relationship between the two men does not prevent Harry from becoming involved in the separatist plot to seize a radio station. He does not merely abandon André and the other conspirators because he still values the remnants of André's friendship. He believes too that he owes André something for past assistance from which he has profited. Ideological reasons also motivate him to lend his support to the separatists. He finds himself incapable of doing nothing to alter a society he feels to be corrupt and oppressive. However Harry is not

entirely committed to the plot and is plagued by doubts as to the wisdom of his involvement. Opposing his idealistic motives are the feelings that his participation is merely another manifestation of the escapist tendencies in his character. On several occasions he tells himself that he must come to terms with Shirley as well as his "painting career" (69). He is using his revolutionary mission as a means of running away from personal problems and his identity as an artist in the same way that he fled Canada and later the problems with his fiancée's parents. It is difficult to understand his reluctance to accept his own talents since he has been relatively successful in England. Even André, who is also a fairly successful painter, admits in a candid moment that he too is running away although he apparently does not know from what.¹² This personal cowardice as much as ideology motivates their actions.

André, being more firmly committed to the cause of French-Canadian nationalism, makes no effort to come to terms with the personal matters that plague him. While Harry gradually becomes more deeply involved in the ill-starred attempt to create a new world order he is unlike André also trying to create order in his own life, to face his personal difficulties. The novel opens with an admission that his existence is a "chaos" (9) and later he tells

¹²He asks Harry the following question: "What are we running from, eh?" (51).

Janine that his "life is in ruins" (61). One of the major reasons for his chaotic existence is the conviction that his life is without meaning. A strange dream is associated with this belief. In the dream Harry dives into the ocean where he encounters his drowned father who is "weaving long strands of beautiful hair into . . . words" (59) which he finds meaningful. The words lift him to the surface of the ocean and he feels grateful for "the release from death by this beautiful strand of meaning" (59); a "blessed feeling of relief" (60) pervades him. Nevertheless he is unable upon awakening to recall the content of his words. This is obviously a sign that any sense of meaning in his life cannot be a gift but must be the result of his own searching. Although he has previously managed to continue his life without any meaning the matter is now at a crisis stage. The spiritual emptiness is manifesting itself in the paralysis of his creative powers. Since his departure from England he has "hardly painted at all" (62). On certain occasions Harry even seems to have doubts about his identity as a painter and at one point he asks Janine whether she believes that he is an artist. In view of the feelings of meaninglessness to which Harry is subject it is not inconceivable that he joins André out of the desire to find some purpose in his life.

An equally serious difficulty in Harry's life is his poor relationship with Shirley, his fiancée. From the fact that he finds it necessary to tell himself that he must

"face" (69) her one concludes that he has been running away from her and her love. Here too is evidence of the escapist tendencies in his character. Harry recognizes his undeniable need for her during his brief affair with Janine, André's mistress. They become involved with each other because of their mutual skepticism as to the wisdom of André's revolutionary plans and because of their loneliness. Harry misses Shirley and Janine misses André who has "shut [her] out of his life for almost a year" (63) and who does not even "want [her] to understand" (63) his revolutionary beliefs. Obviously there is a failure of communication between all of these people. Harry admits such a failure when he tells Shirley, upon her arrival in Canada, that one of his reasons for leaving her was his inability to "reach" (145) her. Moreover he feels that she does not fully appreciate his fear of being assimilated into modern society. Shirley, in a long speech, succinctly sums up their difficulties on this matter:

What I don't understand about you, Harry, is that you accuse me of silence, of repression, and inhibition, and not saying I love you, and not giving signs and not holding on . . . when all along you have been acting the same way, and not telling me what you thought and felt but just leaving, when you thought it was the end. (148)

Neither of them has been sufficiently open with the other.

A lack of communication is not only the major difficulty between these people but is also the chief problem facing the French and English in Canada. They have a tendency to ignore each other. Harry compares the situation

between the two races to canoers passing each other without waving. He apparently feels that his engagement in separatist politics is a way of bridging the silence between the two races as well as part of a war against modern society. However, in one of his paintings Harry not only illustrates the lack of communication between all races and individuals but also indicates the existence of a better answer than political revolution.

Painting of a circle with the thinnest line. Two colors oppressing each other, . . . saying to each other NOTHING. And to paint it broken. Broken in tangents, ellipses, chords . . . all the functions of a circle never touching. (88)

Despite the apparent disunity there is however a relationship between the various elements of the picture, if only the viewer can see it. Each color is influenced by the presence of every other color; tangents and parabolas are "functions of a circle" (88), that is, aspects of the same thing to which they are related in different ways. In broad terms Harry is saying that all things are related to each other and therefore communication is always possible. There is really no excuse for the silence between races and individuals. The only real problem to be overcome in establishing communications is to see the relationship between diverse elements. There is in other words a problem of vision to be surmounted. Although he does not explicitly mention it he is perhaps working towards the idea that the artist's task is to provide just such a vision. His task will be to create or find a unifying vision for all people,

and also in this particular case, for the French and English in Canada.¹³ Such a vision will establish the basis of future communications. Moreover to achieve this vision it will be necessary for them to assume once more their identities as artists. If indeed Harry does (implicitly) believe that the artist's task is to provide a unifying vision then his involvement in separatist politics is a betrayal of his mission. The subliminal awareness of this fact helps to explain his reluctance to committ himself wholly to the revolution.

The plot in which Harry and the others are involved is a total failure; they do not achieve their objective, and more important, another separatist group assassinates the Prime Minister. Afraid of being connected with the latter deed they flee to Toronto where Harry has a friend who could shelter them. During the drive to Ontario, Harry realizes once more that he has lost himself, meaning thereby that he has surrendered his true identity as an artist by becoming a soldier. He resolves to make a new beginning and challenges André who has been accusing him of treachery, to wage the "war on crap" (184), those aspects of society which they hate, as artists. Although André says nothing he is, according to Harry, glad of the opportunity to take up once more his identity as a painter. After

¹³One recalls Paul Tallard, the artist in Two Solitudes on this point.

further difficulties in which they narrowly miss the possibility of arrest, they flee north to a cabin where they will be able to "get back to [their] painting and forget for a while" (178).

Lawrence Breavman, the protagonist of Leonard Cohen's The Favorite Game (1963) views nature more positively than any other artist-hero encountered in this study. While they look upon nature as a source of inspiration or as a refuge in which the artist can be reborn, he sees nature as the very home of the imagination, the only place where it can be really free and do as it will. The park, which symbolizes nature in this novel, is according to Breavman the "green heart"¹⁴ of the city:

It was the green heart. It gave the children dangerous bushes and heroic landscapes so they could imagine bravery. It gave the nurses and maids winding walks so they could imagine beauty. It gave the young merchant-princes leaf-hid necking benches, views of factories so they could imagine power. It gave the retired brokers vignettes of Scottish lanes, where loving couples walked, so they could lean on their canes and imagine poetry. (66-67)

The park which it also associated with life and growth, is the place where the imagination is free to expand in whatever direction it desires. No moral restrictions are placed on imaginative activity; both violence and beauty are legitimately imagined by those who come to visit it. Thus, in

¹⁴ Leonard Cohen, The Favorite Game (Toronto: McClelland and Stewart, 1970), p. 66. All quotations in this section dealing with The Favorite Game are from this novel unless other indications are given.

Breavman's view, nature is essentially an ally of all imaginative endeavors. Nowhere else can the imagination be so free as here. While it is difficult to assess with great accuracy the degree of influence these encounters with nature have upon his art, it should be noted that his poems contain images that in broad terms may be categorized as being 'natural'; there are references to sparrows, wings and "tiny fragile animals" (163). Breavman also seems to see an intimate relationship between civilization and nature; he speaks of the city being "lost in the wider cradle of mountain and sky" (39). The word "cradle" suggests a mother and child relationship between man and nature. He recognizes too, in the use of the word "lost," that nature is larger than man although this realization does not, as in the case of Alex MacDonald, inspire fear. The intimate relationship between man and nature is also implied in the reference to "the mysterious mechanism of city and black hills" (140). Together civilization and the natural realm constitute a "mechanism," a unit before which Breavman stands in awe.

While nature is more vast than man in size, man is in Breavman's opinion the more important of the two. Looking at one of Henri Rousseau's paintings he realizes that without man "the forest would be barren" (158). The implication is that human presence is something without which nature would be sterile in some way. In these pictures man is always involved either in violence or immobility and

wherever these things are found there is the center of the picture. Should the points of "violence or stillness" (58) be covered the foliage in the painting will seem to die. Thus in Breavman's view man is not only always at the center of the picture, that is, the universe, but without him the natural world lacks life. Plainly he see humanity as the most important element in the universe. .

In contrast to his essentially positive view of the natural world there are moments whne he sees it in a negative manner. At one point he speaks of the sun "threatening" (79) in the east and elsewhere he sees the sun as a "clenched fist" (68). Such feelings are however rare and cannot be taken as the determining factors in his relationship to nature.

While the "green heart" (58) of the city is the park, the "true heart" (222) is the hospital.

The heart of the city wasn't down there among the new buildings and widened streets. It was right over there at the Allan, which, with drugs and electricity, was keeping the businessmen sane, and their wives from suicide and their children free from hatred. The hospital was the true heart, pumping stability and erections and orgasms and sleep into all the withering commercial limbs.
(222)

The hospital returns life, both mental and physical, to those who have been worn out by their participation in modern society. Both body and mind are repaired within its walls. Its function is performed in a technical manner, as shown by the words "pumping" and "electricity," and its central position in the city reveals the mechanical or technical

soul of twentieth-century society. It should be noted however that the hospital, symbol of the mechanical world, and the poet Breavman, symbol of the imaginative world, are not entirely unlike one another. Both are extremely concerned for the body, a fact that is, in the case of the hospital, obvious. Throughout the entire work Breavman thinks of the human body; when he condemns the nuclear arms of the superpowers he does not speak of losing one's life but of losing one's body. His poetry deals mainly with sexual, that is, bodily love, which he believes in the only meaningful form of communication between men and women; it is "the only language left" (112). Both the hospital and Breavman feel that part of their mission is to restore the body, the first mechanically and chemically, the second imaginatively. One of his ambitions is to "give [Shell] back her body" (162), that is restore, by means of poetry, her awareness of the body. Elsewhere he indicates that by means of love he has "taught her about her body and her beauty" (130), things of which she was previously unaware.

However the hospital and the poet differ significantly in terms of their effect on the human mind. The hospital provides "stability" (222) and "sleep" (222). The latter is precisely what Breavman seeks to avoid in his own existence. He is afraid that his relationship to Shell will cause him to fall into a "cowardly sleep, heavily medicated" (171). Elsewhere he speaks of being "in danger of sleep" (168). Breavman fears in other words that he will

cease to be aware of the world around him, that his consciousness will die. Throughout the novel he is pictured as an insomniac, working while others are asleep, unconscious, unaware of things. One of his tasks as a poet is to end the sleep in which most people live even their apparently conscious lives. This can be seen in his desire to create awareness, that is consciousness, of the body in Shell, and also in a statement to Krantz, his friend: "I just [want] to wake you up" (196). The aim of the hospital is of course to provide sleep and unconsciousness for mankind.

By providing sleep and stability the hospital helps to preserve the society from which Breavman, like the protagonists of The Lonely Ones, is alienated. At one time he and his friend Krantz speed through the night away from Montreal, "flying from their majority, from the real bar mitzvah, the real initiation, the real and vicious circumcision which society was hovering to inflict through limits and dull routine" (95). They do not want to be part of a world which condemns its participants to the sleep of "dull routine" and sets limits on one's life. Other signs of his alienation are his lack of belief in any sort of nationalism; he does "not believe in flags" (209). His alienation can also be seen in his friendship for Martin Stark, the idiot-savant whom he meets at a summer camp where he works for a while. This child too is an outcast, always on the fringes of any group activities. Despite his alienation

from the contemporary world Breavman does not identify himself with those who are dedicated to its downfall. Unlike the heroes of The Lonely Ones, he embraces no other political beliefs or ideology. He does not want to join any system at all. The only motive behind his attendance of communist party meetings is to find girls with whom to make love. He is not actively (in the political sense) opposed to modern society but merely disassociates himself from it.

As a result of his published poetry Breavman comes into contact with Canadian 'literary society.' However he displays his contempt for it by using people's admiration as a means of getting numerous women into bed. He never takes his fans seriously but uses them to his own advantage.

In order to understand Breavman's relationships to others it is necessary to realize that there are two elements in his personality, the artist and the man. The phenomenon of the "divided self"¹⁵ is illustrated with remarkable clarity in his life. The artistic self, the poet, is symbolized by the camera that seems to be operating within his head. Ondaatje, in his monograph on Cohen refers to this self as the "conscious poet,"¹⁶ who watches himself act, even in his "most intimate moments."¹⁷ Breavman has

¹⁵The Introduction contains a discussion of this phenomenon in the artist's mind. See also Beebe's Ivory Towers and Sacred Founts, p. 21-64.

¹⁶Michael Ondaatje, Leonard Cohen (Toronto: McClelland and Stewart, 1970), p. 28.

¹⁷Ibid.

a movie "always running somewhere in his mind" (99), and everyone including himself is an actor in it. Consequently he is a very self-conscious person. By means of this camera he can observe reality from a distance and in an objective manner. However it is not only a distancing mechanism but is also the mechanism by which he creates art. A camera creates images of people and events; it makes art from them by doing so. Breavman's artistic self or camera operates in a similar manner; he sees almost everyone and everything as part of a movie, that is as elements in a work of art. Most of the people he knows are "his raw material and he uses and translates them constantly into art";¹⁸ he does this to Tamara, whom he employs in a short-story and with Shell, the American girl whom he regards as a beautiful source of poetry. In Ondaatje's words, Breavman is "trying to turn everything into gold."¹⁹ The camera is significant not only insofar as it symbolizes the creative consciousness but also insofar as it reveals the emphasis of Breavman's creativity. Films record only the body and on film the soul can be seen only in its bodily manifestations. Joy or sorrow must be given physical expression to be known. The importance of the body to Breavman has already been noted.

¹⁸Ibid., p. 28.

¹⁹Ibid., p. 31.

The part of Breavman not associated with the camera, the poetry-making faculty, is referred to as "the deputy" (165). This aspect of him is not distanced from others or the world, but instead lives in close contact with them. "The deputy" experiences life while the camera watches and creates art.

Breavman watched his deputy make [Shell] happy
while he stared and stared. (165)

The "he" refers of course to the observing camera. The Breavman that others know and live with is only his "deputy" and not the real person, who is the poet. The previous quotation indicates that Breavman's two selves are simultaneously operative; he is able to satisfy his human needs while at the same time he carries on with his creative activities. He is able to participate and to observe at the same time. This indicates that unlike most of the artist-heroes that have been encountered, he has almost instinctively balanced the tower and the fount. He observes even while he is experiencing and both activities are necessary to the poet.

As a result of his meeting with Shell the two selves begin to conflict with one another. Shell is so beautiful and attractive that his deputy falls in love with her. He becomes so happy that the artist, "the master Breavman" (168) is in danger of being destroyed.

He was very comfortable. He had begun to accept his deputy's joy. This lover was the most successful thing he had ever made, and the temptation was to supply him with a wallet and identification and drown the master Breavman . . . (168)

Thus the human self, the "deputy" presents a threat to the continued existence of the artist. This threat takes two forms. In the first place it puts the "Beavman eye" (168) into "danger of sleep" (168), which as already noted he opposes. Wakefulness is his aim. Secondly, the happiness that he is gaining from his relationship to Shell also destroys his desire for power. Suddenly he wants "no legions to command" (146). This is a rather disastrous turn of affairs since he seems to identify poetry and power. His ambition as a poet is "to touch people like a magician, to change them, or hurt them, leave [his] brand, make them beautiful" (101). To do these things he needs to possess power over them; in Breavman's case it will be supplied by poetry which can affect or "touch" others in whatever way the poet desires. His desire for power is also manifested during his younger years when he experimented with hypnosis on animals as well as on Heather, his mother's maid.

Breavman wants artistic power not only to awaken others, as has been noted, but also to connect himself to them. This is reflected in his wish to "touch people" (101). The root of his aim lies in his fear of loneliness as well as in the realization that "[everywhere] people are living in utter loneliness" (214). Especially important to him is his connection with Shell which he feels "must never be severed" (222); as long as they remain connected everything in life would remain "simple" (222). However, at the same time he does not want to lose himself

in her or the happiness which she can provide; he wants to remain an individual, to be distinct yet connected. The movie camera operating in Breavman's head is significant on this point. It connects people in a film but at the same time preserves their distinctness or individuality since each frame is a discrete entity. His two selves also provide connection and distinctness, while the "deputy" participates the camera observes.

Because Shell threatens Breavman's wakefulness as well as his desire for power he ultimately decides to leave her. This choice it will be seen is opposed to the interests of the "deputy," the human, participating aspect of his personality and favors the camera, the awakened, distant, part of him. He is in effect choosing, at least temporarily, the tower over the fount. The last letter to Shell in which the reasons for the break are explained to her reveals several characteristics of the tower artist. He tells her that he wants "no attachments" (215). Moreover, he mentions that he is "afraid to live in any place but expectation" (215), showing that for a while he wants to avoid the life that must be lived in the present, life as it is. His desire for "discipline" (215) is symptomatic of his dissatisfaction with the limitations that his human weaknesses impose on him and of the wish to overcome them. By means of isolation and discipline he wants "something" (215) within him to begin, to be born. One recalls on this point the tower artists' desire to annihilate the "human

self in order to free the creative spirit."²⁰ These actions will help Breavman to save the creative self from the sleep that is slowly overtaking him. In view of the fact that he has previously balanced the characteristics of the tower and fount it is unlikely that he will permanently emphasize the former. His choice of the tower is a temporary measure designed to restore the creative self, or camera, which was gradually falling asleep. He will probably balance them again later.

The only people whom Breavman does not systematically turn into images, that is art, are his friend Krantz and Martin Stark, an idiot-savant whom he meets at a summer camp. That he does not use them as raw material indicates that these are the only solidly human relationships in which Breavman becomes involved. He and Krantz are during most of their lives perfectly compatible; they share the same interests, girls, and the similar views on modern society. The deep understanding between them is indicated by their strange dialogues, in which they feed each other lines; in effect "their two egos perform for each other."²¹ with flawless precision. They have few if any secrets from each other. The importance of this relationship to Breavman can be seen in the fact that when Krantz departs for England the movie in his head stops. He merely wants to "wish him

²⁰ Beebe, Ivory Towers and Sacred Founts, p. 133.

²¹ Ondaatje, Leonard Cohen, p. 28.

luck" (108) since there is "nothing else to say to a person" (108). For Breavman Krantz is a person and not an image or raw material for poetry. Later, "although they still understand each other perfectly,"²² they become a little estranged from one another. Krantz accepts modern society and nationalism while his friend is still alienated. They do not actually part but the relationship is not as close as it once was.

The other person with whom Breavman establishes a deep personal relationship is Martin Stark, who replaces Krantz as a partner for dialogues. In his dialogues about Dionne's store Martin makes a ritual of the commercialism of modern society. His desire to count everything is a ritualisation of modern science which strives to see all things quantitatively. He parodies the twin pillars of the society from which Breavman is alienated and shows how idiotic they can become when carried out unthinkingly, automatically. Of course Martin is not consciously parodying society; he takes his dialogues seriously. In this sense he is an incarnation of the tendencies of the modern world, a living parody, or an image. He is in other words not unlike a living work of art. Consequently Breavman's affection for Martin is, at least partially, the creator's love for a work of art which he admires. Another major reason why he likes Martin is that the boy is like himself, an outcast from society, essentially unacceptable to those around him. Ondaatje points out that "Martin is the way

²²Ondaatje, Leonard Cohen, p. 32.

Breavman likes to see himself, wounded and brilliant,"²³ perhaps wounded because he is brilliant. Martin's brilliance lies in his parody of modern world which makes others take him for insane, while Breavman's brilliance lies in his poetic talent, which is the origin of his difficult personal life. The relationship between them ends with the death of the boy.

At least four other non-satirical pieces of artist-fiction made their appearance in Canada during the sixties and early seventies. Probably the most interesting of these is Robert Hunter's Erebus (1968) in which two characters reject creativity in order to take up pursuits that in their opinion are more valuable to them. The novel records what one might call a journey away from art.

The narrator, "I," who at one time wanted to paint, rejects all art, because he feels that it has "almost nothing to do with real inner being."²⁴ He does not believe that art is of any use in the discovery of his identity which is his main interest throughout the novel. "I's" search for his true self leads him from art to low life, where he is involved in various escapades inevitably involving sex and alcohol. By the end of the novel he has apparently found himself and accepts such previously

²³Ondaatje, Leonard Cohen, p. 33.

²⁴Robert Hunter, Erebus (Toronto: McClelland and Stewart, 1968), p. 15. All quotations in the section dealing with Erebus are from this novel unless other indications are given.

rejected values as responsibility and loyalty. Nothing at all is said about art.

"I's" relationship to nature is also noteworthy. He is totally alienated from modern society; the force of his rejection can only be fully conveyed by the imagery found in his narration. In nature he finds a refuge from the contemporary world, a place where his pains can be soothed and where his humanity, buried under perverse sex, alcohol and the brutality of work in a slaughterhouse can emerge.

The other artist is Darryl, a would-be writer who in the course of the novel, discovers that the needs of his personality are more important than creative activities. He abandons his book and goes back to live with the wife he has cruelly abandoned. Darryl's rejection of art is, characteristically since he is a writer, well documented in a long letter to "I." He denies that he ever really wanted to be a writer and even contends that writing was a symptom of a spiritual sickness. He claims that in attempting to write he was only acting out a role. His rejection of literature is stated in no uncertain terms.

It is my belief that almost all - if not, indeed, all - books fall into the same category: verbal edifices constructed to disguise (to decorate? justify?) a soul that is at bottom barren
(207)

At the end of the letter he nevertheless states that he might start writing again some day but that for the present he firmly rejects all creative activities in favor of simply

living with Vanessa. It will be noted that the choices made by "I" and Darryl are directly contrary to the choice made by Breavman. He chooses, at least temporarily, art over life, while the protagonists of Erebus choose life over art.

Superficially, Sinclair Ross's third novel, A Whir of Gold (1970) is a piece of artist-fiction. The protagonist is Sonny McAlpine, an unemployed clarinet player from Saskatchewan looking for work in Montreal. However in the story Ross makes no attempt to develop any themes connected with art or artistry. Sonny's musical talent is significant only insofar as it prevents him from getting a job. The focal point of the novel is his relationship to Mad (Madeline), a Nova Scotian girl whom he meets in a beer parlor. They stay together for a few weeks, living from Mad's earnings as a waitress in a cheap restaurant. Sonny's inability to find a job and damaged pride as a result of having to accept Mad's support leads him into involvement with Charlie, a professional criminal. While robbing a jewelry store Sonny receives a small wound. Mad helps him recover but, ashamed at his deed, and depressed by his financial dependence on her, he drives her away in a cruel manner.

During the last decade Hugh Hood published two other novels that may be categorized as artist-fiction. Neither are as interesting as White Figure, White Ground. The first of these is The Camara Always Lies (1964), a novel about people involved in the American film industry. The second is A Game of Touch (1970). The narrator and

protagonist of this work is Jake Price, an aspiring political cartoonist, who travels to Montreal where he becomes involved with a group of people who seem to live bohemian lives but are really respectably employed. Jake on the other hand tries for a time to live at the fringes of society without any responsibility or job. By the end of the novel he has accepted a position as a personnel evaluator for a large company and is well on his way to being solidly integrated into the modern world. He decides to accept his responsibilities to society. One suspects that like Alex MacDonald he will develop a cordial relationship with the contemporary world.

Several satirical artist-hero novels have also been published in Canada since 1960. The first of these, Mordecai Richler's The Incomparable Atuk (1963) is to be regarded as light entertainment. Indeed, one is tempted to label the work a farce. The story tells of the rather incredible adventures of Atuk, an Eskimo who is brought to Toronto by a fur company because he supposedly possesses poetic talent. Atuk exploits his opportunity to become rich and famous with a ferocity and ruthlessness that could make many a business tycoon blush for shame. In the novel publishers, poets, academics and other members of the Canadian cultural establishment are also sharply attacked.

John Cornish's Sherbourne Street (1968) is a more gentle satire of Toronto than is The Incomparable Atuk. The story deals with an ill-advised attempt to revive a

conservatory once owned by Ronald Napier, a minor and forgotten composer. The plan is spear-headed by his daughter and her friends. As the plot unfolds Cornish fires his barbs at the cultural pretensions of Toronto, nationalism in art and academics who seek to make their reputations by reviving the names of such deservedly forgotten creators as Ronald Napier.

Probably the most readable satire on artists written after 1960 is Robert Kroetsch's The Studhorse Man (1969). The fictitious author of this work, Demeter Proudfoot, is a parody of the artist in the tower. Demeter sits naked in a dry bathtub, symbol of the fount, in a room from which he observes the world in a mirror. The room is located in a mental institution, where Demeter, far removed from the world, dreams of the great sexual adventures of his hero, Hazard Lapage. These verge on the surreal. However the serious content underlying Demeter's dreams is obvious. He is concerned about the difficulties encountered by man's creative abilities, symbolized by the procreative functions of the hero's horse, in an increasingly mechanized world.

The artist-heroes of the sixties differ from those of the previous two decades in several ways. The most obvious difference between them is the fact that the later artists have an essentially positive relationship with the natural world. Because they do not depend on the land they are not obligated to struggle against it in order to

pursue their ambitions. The majority of the artist-heroes also generally belong to the fount tradition while their predecessors were evenly divided in their preferences for the fount or tower. The attraction to the fount felt by the artist-heroes of the sixties is, in all probability, a reflection of the widespread belief in the importance of participating in the affairs of the world. Cohen's Lawrence Breavman is the only artist in this period, or for that matter in Canadian literature, to actually unify the tower and the fount. It will be recalled that in the opinion of this paper, David Canaan might have, had he lived, done the same. Despite their preference for the fount most of the artist-heroes of the sixties have trouble establishing personal relationships. On this point they resemble the majority of their predecessors who have similar difficulties. However they differ from those of the earlier periods of artist-fiction in that they are usually successful. With the exception of "I" and Darryl who intentionally give up art, and Sonny McAlpine, the artists of the sixties have achieved at least some of their goals. This fact confirms the observation that artists associated with the fount are more often successful than those drawn to the tower. Most of the new artist-heroes also use the imagination positively; Alex MacDonald uses it to assert the primacy of human values, Harry Summers wants to use it to reform (or transform) society, and Breavman employs it to make people aware of their bodies. Unlike the artists of the foregoing two decades,

who maintained a relatively cordial relationship with the modern world, the new artist-heroes are alienated from society. Alex MacDonald and Jake Price are the only ones who gladly take their place in it.

This period of Canadian artist-fiction also witnessed the appearance of a new theme - the rejection of art - which is manifested in Erebus and The Lonely Ones. In Erebus "I" and Darryl abandon art to discover their identities. André, of The Lonely Ones rejects art in favor of revolutionary action. He is however persuaded to return to the creative activities by Harry. They intend to carry on their struggle against the modern world by means of art. The Lonely Ones presents the first portrait of the artist as revolutionary to be found in Canadian fiction since Solo.

Few of the artist-hero novels published after 1960 are the equals of As For Me and My House or The Mountain and the Valley. The major flaw in most of the later books is poor characterization. Alex MacDonald for example takes life too easily for one to believe that he could be subject to profound experiences of terror. In the case of Harry Summers, one is asked to believe that a man who leaves his fiancée with barely a word of explanation joins a terrorist plot, the success of which is uncertain, merely to help a friend. Moreover, the change in his character, from a person who runs away from all unpleasant situations to one who suddenly engages in revolution, is not sufficiently accounted for. Lawrence Breavman is better drawn

than either MacDonald or Summers. From the beginning of the novel Cohen stresses that he is a different kind of person; the fact that there are two of him, the movie running in his head, and his childhood precocity demonstrate this fact. Consequently his often strange actions are adequately explained and Breavman emerges as a believable character. For this reason alone one is justified in claiming that The Favorite Game is the best artist-novel produced during the sixties.

CONCLUSION

The foregoing chapters have presented an examination of some of the artist-heroes who have appeared in Canadian novels written after 1920. This analysis has concerned itself mainly with four major aspects of the artist's existence: his relationship to the natural environment, to others, and to modern society, as well as his preference for either the tower or the fount. Other matters that have been given brief consideration are the success or failure of the artist, and the manner in which he uses his imaginative faculties.

The analysis of these artist-heroes reveals that the majority of them share a certain number of characteristics. Most of them use the imagination positively, that is, they do not employ it to oppose or to deny the real world. As a matter of fact, only two of the artists who have been considered use their imaginative abilities negatively. One of them, Len Sterner is insane, while the other, Neil Fraser was shown to be a rather immature person. The fact that the majority of Canadian artist-heroes do not use their talents to oppose the real world lends support to the finding that most of them also display a preference for the fount. This means that on the whole, they have no desire to isolate themselves from the life

of the world. They want to participate in it. After all, those who accept the world are hardly inclined to want to deny it in any way. The fact that the greatest number of artist-heroes favor the fount, does not as it might seem at first, clash with their tendency to have poor personal relationships. (This latter characteristic they share with their creative brethren in the literatures of Europe and America.) A desire to be involved in the life of the world is no guarantee that the involvement will be successful or satisfactory. It might be added that their preference for the fount is rather surprising since so many of them are engaged in a struggle with various aspects of the world, such as the natural environment and society. One would expect them to display a wish to withdraw from it. Although most of the artist-heroes prefer the fount the majority of them do not display a desire to embrace modern society. As a matter of fact, Canadian artist-heroes are almost evenly divided into two camps on the issue of accepting or rejecting it. Naturally, allegiance to the fount does not require the artist to accommodate himself to the modern world. The desire to participate in life exerts no demand to accept all of its facets. There is also no overall tendency in favor of portraying successful or unsuccessful artist-heroes in Canadian fiction.

The previous discussion concerned itself with the overall tendencies that are to be noted when Canadian artist-heroes are viewed collectively. Of course, an

individual period may manifest a trend contradicting that of another period. An example of this would be the matter of the artist's relationship to modern society. In the years between 1940 and 1960 the artists tended to accept it, while since 1960 it has been largely rejected by them. These different trends within the body of Canadian artist-fiction in all probability reflect certain characteristics of the 'Zeitgeist' of a given time. This claim is made in a cautious spirit since its proof could only be provided by a separate study. However no other way of explaining the differing tendencies found in various periods of Canadian artist-fiction suggests itself. An illustration in support of this contention will be given. The sixties may be characterized as an era of general disenchantment with the established social structure. At the same time there was also a belief in the importance of participation in the life of the world. Both of these aspects of the 'Zeitgeist' of these years are evident in the artist-heroes of this time. They are generally alienated from society and they prefer the fount to the tower. During the forties and fifties dissatisfaction with society was less widespread; the artists featured in the novels of these years tend to have a cordial relationship with the modern world.

One of the most important characteristics shared by Canadian artist-heroes appearing between 1920 and 1960 is the awareness of the incompatibility between the life on the land and the pursuit of artistic ambitions. Each

of the artists studied shows that to one extent or another he is conscious of this situation. The life on the land does not permit them to channel their energies entirely into their creative activities. Moreover the artist is often in conflict with the kind of people produced by the land who simply cannot understand him. As the foregoing chapters have illustrated each of the protagonists makes various attempts to escape from the land. Many of them fail to free themselves; this is a major factor in explaining their lack of success.

It is seen that the land opposes the expression of creative impulses. If D.G. Jones is correct in claiming that in many poems and novels "the land is associated with the most vital elements in the lives of the characters"¹ then one is required to conclude that a great deal of artist-fiction stands in opposition to a major theme in Canadian literature. The "most vital element []"² in the life of the artist is the desire to create and this is often frustrated by the land. As the foregoing chapters have shown it is precisely for this reason that many artists want to escape it. The land forces them to remain "inarticulate."³ In most cases they go to the city where they find the freedom to develop their talents. The city and not the land is

¹D.G. Jones, Butterfly on Rock, (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1970), p. 6.

²Ibid.

³Ibid.

the ally of the artist in the forty years of Canadian artist-fiction after 1920.

It is realized of course that Jones uses the terms land and nature interchangeably. This is in the view of our study a dangerous practice because it hides the fact that the relationship to the natural environment changes when people are no longer dependent on it. What this paper has shown is that the natural environment is not always associated with the "most vital elements"⁴ of a character's life.

A change in the relationship to the natural environment is found in the artist-fiction appearing after 1960. No longer required to struggle against the land, the artist looks on the natural world in a more positive manner than before. One may with some justification apply Jones' statement that "the land is associated with the most vital elements in the lives of characters"⁵ to the artist-heroes of these years. Nature does not oppose their creative impulses. Alex MacDonald goes to it to paint, Harry Summers finds it a place where he can be reborn as an artist, and Breavman sees in nature the only place where the imagination can be wholly free. This is possible for the sole reason that the artist is no longer subject to the natural environment, that he is superior to it, and can terminate or alter his

⁴Ibid.

⁵Ibid.

relationship with it at will.

It should be emphasized that on the matter of the relationship between the artist's ambitions and the land and nature there is amazingly little variation. All of the artists appearing between 1920 and 1960 are aware of the difficulties posed to their aims by the land and make attempts to leave. They may, as David Canaan does, also love the land but this does not negate the fact of its hostility to their ambitions. None of the artist-heroes of the sixties finds nature antipathetic to creative projects although they may, like Alex MacDonald still have some negative feelings towards it.

Most of the artists featured after 1960 are based in the city which is the foundation of modern society. It is to be noted that none of the artist-heroes despite their dislike for modern society leave it permanently to live in the natural environment. They prefer to live in a surrounding from which they alienated than to serve the land. The ultimate consequence of this is that the contemporary Canadian artist-hero is caught in a peculiar position: unlike his predecessors he has no actual refuge, no environment which is suited to him. Since he must maintain his base in the city he must maintain his relationship with the very source of his alienation. This some of them are unwilling to do; they want to 'fit in.' Therefore such artists as Harry Summers engage in revolutionary politics in the attempt to alter society to suit themselves. It would seem

however that others are content to remain alienated. As a matter of fact, Breavman embraces this fate gladly.

When comparing the struggles of the artist-hero before 1960 and those of the artist-hero after that date one notes that in this genre there is a 'turn inward.' The early artists are usually involved in a conflict with the external world: they seek a surrounding on which creativity is possible. The struggle to be an artist takes the form of a search for an environment. This can be seen in the lives of Len Sterner, Paul Minas, Richard Milne, Robert Fulton, David Canaan, Neil Fraser and Lilli Landash. Two partial exceptions to this claim should be noted: Philip Bentley and Paul Tallard. Bentley's difficulties in creating stem largely from within himself, although he too requires a better environment than Horizon. Tallard's artistic problems are solved by the discovery of proper subject matter. This argument is not intended to imply that artist-heroes before 1960 feel no inner conflicts in their efforts to create but only that the inner conflict is overshadowed by the quest for suitable surroundings.

After 1960 the scene of the major conflicts of the artist's life is usually found within him. Most of these artists do not feel compelled to find an environment in which they are able to create since they have this in the city. The struggle to create now takes place within the protagonist who has to overcome obstacles of his own making. This is evident in Alex MacDonald who experiences some

difficulties with "Light Source #2," and in Lawrence Breavman who must choose between personal happiness with Shell and the continued development of his own art. Even Harry Summers, who (among other reasons) joins some revolutionaries in order to improve society finds that the major obstacle to painting is not the external world but his own refusal to accept his identity as an artist and his responsibilities as a man. By going north to sort himself out he shifts the scene of his struggles from the external world to himself. In view of this turn inward one may reasonably expect that future Canadian artist-novels will be increasingly concerned with the psychology of the artist.

It may be worthwhile to make a few brief remarks regarding the artist-heroes appearing in English, European and American fiction and those featured in Canadian novels. No positive comparisons will be made as such an undertaking would require an entirely separate study. In reviewing the kinds of artists that are found in Canadian fiction one notes that two types, not uncommon in foreign novels of this genre, are missing. None of the gargantuan artists who inhabit the pages of European and American fiction are found in Canadian literature. There are no Eugene Witlas,⁶ of Eugene Gants⁷ or Jean Christophes⁸ to be found. No

⁶Theodore Dreiser, The Genius.

⁷Thomas Wolfe, Of Time and the River.

⁸Romain Rolland, Jean Christophe.

Canadian artist-hero is able to absorb life and conquer it as these three characters do. Another kind of artist who is not often found in Canadian artist-fiction is the bohemian, the man living at the edge of society, neither supporting or opposing it, free of all restraint. In Canadian fiction one rarely encounters characters such as those featured in The Horse's Mouth⁹ and Antic Hay.¹⁰ Robertson Davies' Cobbler is one of the few bohemians found in the literature of this nation; one may perhaps even put Lawrence Breavman into this category, along with Richler's André Bennett.¹¹

In concluding this paper it should be pointed out that artist-hero novels not only represent a significant portion of Canadian fiction but they have also contributed qualitatively to it. Such works as The Mountain and the Valley and As For Me and My House are generally considered to be among the best novels ever written in Canada. It is possible that in time The Favorite Game might also acquire a high reputation. Grove's The Yoke of Life is doubtlessly one of the strangest and most compelling Canadian novels. The works of Edward McCourt, despite their flaws, have certainly added to the literature of this country by their presentation of the problems caused by the possession of a

⁹ Joyce Cary, The Horse's Mouth.

¹⁰ Aldous Huxley, Antic Hay.

¹¹ Humphrey Cobbler is found in Tempest Tost, Leaven of Malice and in A Mixture of Frailties. Andre Bennett is found in Mordecai Richler's the Acrobats.

powerful imagination. Many artist-novels have dealt with man's relationship to the natural environment which is according to several critics, one of the central concerns of Canadian literature. They have helped to improve our understanding of this relationship by considering it from the artist's point of view. For these reasons one concludes that artist-fiction is an important part of the literature of this nation.

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